

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's Prime Minister-designate Tansu Ciller said Saturday she would propose setting up a coalition government with the rightwing Motherland Party with no strings attached. Ms. Ciller, who leads the True Path Party, said she would make the proposal on Monday to the party's leader, Mesut Yilmaz, who is her number-one political rival. President Süleiman Demirel asked Ms. Ciller on Friday to form a new government, after the pro-Islamic Welfare Party, led by Necmettin Erbakan, proved unable to do so and gave up. Welfare came first in Dec. 24 parliamentary elections by a small margin, but it failed to win enough seats to form a majority government on its own. "We are going to present a proposal to the Motherland Party on Monday to form a coalition, with no preconditions," Ms. Ciller said after a meeting with True Path's top executives, who gave her the green light to negotiate with other parties. Mr. Yilmaz, who twice rejected a Motherland-Welfare coalition, has himself called for talks between his party, with 133 seats in the 550-seat parliament, and True Path, which has 135.

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Ramadan fasting begins today

AMMAN (Petra) — Today marks the beginning of the Holy Month of Ramadan, a statement issued by Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddine Al Khatib Al Tamimi on Saturday said. Sheikh Tamimi said the crescent of the Holy Month was sighted Saturday evening. Palestinians are also to start the dawn-to-dusk fasting month on Sunday, a day after their historic general election. "Tomorrow is the first day of the Ramadan month and everybody is called upon to fast," Judge Mohammad Abu Surdana announced late Saturday on Palestinian television. "The crescent of the month was sighted in Saudi Arabia," home of Islam's holiest sites, he said. Devout Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sex from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan. Oman announced Ramadan will start Monday. It said the new moon ushering the start of Ramadan was not sighted on Saturday night, making Monday the first day believers in Oman would fast during daylight hours.

Palestinians turn out en masse for election

Voting judged as fair despite irregularities and violations

Israeli presence mars Jerusalem balloting

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIANS TURNED out massively Saturday to elect a president and self-rule legislature in what was a ringing vote of confidence in Yasser Arafat and his step-by-step strategy for creating an independent state.

Election officials reported a high turnout across the Gaza Strip and West Bank, but said voter participation was lower in the two urban centres still occupied by Israel — East Jerusalem and Hebron.

Average turnout was about 70 per cent, boosted by bright sunshine after several days of storms, with participation climbing to 85 per cent in the Gaza Strip.

"Voters... have turned out massively to take part in the first Palestinian election today," the Central Election Commission said.

"In general, we have not received any major complaints on the election process," said Gaby Baramki, an official at commission headquarters in Ramallah.

Voting was extended for three hours in East Jerusalem where observers protested a heavy-handed Israeli police presence had hindered

polling. Voting was also continuing beyond the official closing time of 7:00 p.m. (1700 GMT) in the West Bank town of Jenin and several other locations, officials at the Central Election Commission said.

Officials said the polling stations in East Jerusalem would remain open until 10:00 p.m. after Israeli police and border guards clamped a tight cordon around the Holy City, dissuading many residents from voting.

Turnout in East Jerusalem was only 30 per cent as of 4:00 p.m.

"After the opening of polling stations, Palestinians were held back by barriers and road checkpoints," the commission said, blaming the low turnout on "obstacles erected by the Israelis."

Hundreds of Israeli police and border guards were deployed around polling stations in Arab Jerusalem, checking and double-checking voters' identification papers.

"The massive deployment of Israeli policemen in front of polling stations dissuaded Palestinians from voting," said Mr. Baramki.

Prince Moulay Hicham of

Morocco, a member of the 650-strong international observer force, said, "I deplore the harassment of voters by security forces in East Jerusalem."

More than a million Palestinians had registered to vote.

Israeli police justified their deployment by citing fears of possible disruption by Israeli and Palestinian hardliners opposed to the land-for-peace process which led to Saturday's election.

But Palestinians said the Israelis were trying to undermine the vote in Jerusalem.

The Israeli presence in Jerusalem was a stark contrast to excited, packed scenes in the Gaza Strip, especially when Mr. Arafat had to battle through crowds of thousands to cast his vote.

"This is a new era. It is the first legislative and presidential elections for the Palestinian people," Mr. Arafat said after voting. "This is the foundation for our Palestinian state."

Mr. Arafat, who almost lost his trademark black and white headscarf in a crush of reporters, dropped two ballots — white for members of

(Continued on page 7)

Settlers mistreat Jordanian observer in Hebron

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Petra) — A member of the Jordanian observer team monitoring the Palestinian elections in Hebron was subjected to provocations and pushed around by Jewish settlers living in the West Bank city, Abdul Salam Majali, head of the Jordanian observer team, said Saturday.

Dr. Majali said that the settlers abused the Jordanian observer in Hebron, which had a poor turnout of voters because of the settlers' interference in the elections and demonstrations staged at the Ibrahim school yard.

Dr. Majali also expressed regret over the poor turnout of voters in Arab Jerusalem, and attributed it to the heavy presence of Israeli forces at

(Continued on page 2)



Mohammad Yassin Juellis, 72, votes in the West Bank town of Hebron on Saturday (AFP photo)

Iraq accepts Ghali invitation, awaits U.N. to set oil sale talks

Unclear whether acceptance based on 986

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq is waiting for the United Nations to fix the date and place for talks on implementing a resolution that would allow it to export oil for humanitarian needs, Baghdad radio said Saturday.

The Iraqi dollar rose sharply against the U.S. dollar and shots of joy were fired in the streets of Baghdad on news that the government had agreed to discuss with the U.N. the sale of oil to buy badly needed food and medicine.

"Iraq has informed the United Nations secretary general, Boutros Ghali, that it is waiting for the date and place of these talks to be fixed," the radio said.

The dinar was trading at 2,000 to one U.S. dollar on the blackmarket in Baghdad on Saturday, compared to 2,650 dinars on Thursday.

Iraq's official newspapers highlighted the government's decision to enter talks with the United Nations on selling oil for food, showing President Saddam Hussein chairing a meeting discussing it.

"The meeting took a decision to positively respond to the call by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali," Al Jomhuriyah and Qadisiyah newspapers said, referring to a joint meeting by Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council and ruling Baath Party.

The papers showed Saddam Hussein chairing the meeting on Friday night in his field marshal uniform.

But the media, tightly controlled by the government, played down any suggestion Iraq had made concessions to get an invitation from Dr. Ghali to enter talks.

Chief U.N. spokeswoman Sylvia Foa announced the talks late on Friday in New York.

A report on Iraqi radio and television on Friday night made no reference to U.N.

Resolution 986, which would allow Iraq to sell up to \$2 billion of oil over six months. It also did not say whether Iraq had agreed to any terms to enter the talks.

Shcbbab (Youth) Television, run by President Saddam's eldest son Uday, interrupted normal programming on Friday night to announce the news. It was followed by sporadic firing in the air on Baghdad streets, a traditional Iraqi celebration of good news.

Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, who has been initiating contacts with the U.N., has said Iraq would enter talks as long as there were no preconditions imposed.

U.N. spokeswoman Foa said Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun had handed over a letter from Mr. Aziz in which "the Iraqi government accepts the secretary general's invitation to enter into discussions with the secretary of the United Nations regarding the oil-for-food formula."

"The secretary-general hopes these talks will begin as soon as possible in New York," said Ms. Foa.

No other details were immediately available, and it was not known whether Mr. Aziz himself would lead the Iraqi delegation to the talks. Arab sources mentioned the possibility of discussions at a "technical" level.

In Cairo, the Arab League lent its backing to Resolution 986.

"The league supports the implementation of Resolution 986 on an experimental basis for a period of six months to see if it constitutes a violation of Iraq's sovereignty or not," a senior official of the pan-Arab body told journalists.

"The league rejects any violation of the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of Iraq," Ahmad Ben Helli said, adding that the resolution was "a step towards easing the suffering of the Iraqi people."

Mr. Ben Helli said the league was coordinating with "the United Nations and the five permanent Security Council members, especially France, in implementing the resolution."

Iraq has been under an almost total U.N. trade ban since invading Kuwait in August 1990, an embargo which has reduced the vast majority of the oil-rich country's 18 million citizens to grinding poverty.

The United Nations last year passed Resolution 986, the second motion of its kind, which would allow Iraq to sell some oil to buy urgent humanitarian supplies like food and medicine.

But the resolution also dictates how the oil is to be exported, imposes strict U.N. supervision on revenues and allocates some money to go to relief for areas in northern Iraq held by rebel Kurdish groups.

Since it was passed, Baghdad has consistently rejected Resolution 986 as an infringement of its sovereignty.

Dr. Ghali cannot change the language of the resolution or the parameters set by it. Only the Security Council can alter it by adopting another resolution after the oil-for-food plan has been in operation for six months.

But he has invited Iraq to talk about how the measures should be implemented and the food distributed.

Official Iraqi newspapers also carried remarks by Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf in which he attacked the United States for trying to "burglarise" frozen Iraqi assets.

The papers said Washing-

ton was trying to liquidate up to \$3 billion of Iraqi assets to pay people claiming reparations for damage suffered in the 1990 invasion and occupation.

"The government of Iraq shall take the necessary legal measures against action by the American administration to burglarise or seize our money in American banks and institutions," Mr. Sahaf said.

Food prices in the Iraqi capital meanwhile plummeted.

Prices of essential commodities, reacting to the news, fell early in the week, rose, and then fell again on Saturday.

There was chaos in Jamila, Iraq's foodstuffs spot market on Saturday. The price per kilo of rice fell to 950 dinars from 1,300, of flour to 450 from 600 dinars, and sugar to 1,300 from 1,700 dinars.

Hardest hit were small retailers, cart owners and kerb dealers.

"I am going bust. It is over. It (rice) lost about 350 dinars in three hours," said one young man pushing his empty cart in Jamila which bustled with shoppers on Saturday.

It was a different story for the women shoppers. "I wish to God it is serious this time. What has our oil done? Why do not they let it go out and send us food — those wretched and merciless Americans," said one woman.

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(Continued on page 7)

Hamas buries 2 slain members

JENIN (Agencies) — Thousands of people took part in funeral ceremonies here Saturday for two militants killed in a shootout with Israeli troops on the eve of historic Palestinian elections.

But contrary to earlier claims, the ceremonies did not erupt into anti-election protests by the fundamentalist Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

"There were no incidents," said Jenin police chief Fayez Arafat after the burial of Tareq Mansour and Abdul Rahman Jaradat.

"The two men were buried during the morning so as not to disrupt the election," he told AFP. A third Hamas member slain in the shootout late Friday was buried overnight, officials said.

Israeli troops shot and killed the Hamas militants after the three tried to force their way through an army checkpoint into Israeli territory and opened fire, wounding a soldier in the leg, the army said.

Late Friday hundreds of people took to Jenin's streets calling "Revenge, revenge," and tearing town campaign posters for Saturday's elections.

The head of the Palestinian police, General Nasser Yusef, on Saturday accused the Israeli soldiers of having fired "indiscriminately" at the Hamas militants' car.

But officials from both sides sought to play down the incident for fear it could disrupt the elections.

In Amman, Hamas charged that Palestinian agents tipped off Israeli soldiers who killed the three.

Hamas called on the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) to reveal the identity of the agents it said

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan condemns unrest in Bahrain as un-Islamic

Bahraini army says it is ready to intervene

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordan on Saturday condemned political unrest in Bahrain, calling it an attempt to "destabilise the security and stability" of the country.

Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, expressed Jordan's solidarity with Bahrain in its efforts to quell disturbances.

Voicing Jordan's absolute support for and solidarity with Bahrain in "quelling these criminal acts," the minister said Jordan was fully confident that the Bahraini government "is capable of confronting and handling disturbances stirred by those who went astray from their society."

"Society has the right to treat them in the manner which they have chosen for themselves," he said.

Mr. Kabariti said "terrorists acts are to be condemned wherever they might come from and regardless of any justifications and the forces that stand behind them."

"These groups have done harm to Islam because in the name of Islam they have acted to abuse religion and do harm to the Muslim people," he added.

The United Arab Emirates also offered its support to Bahrain on Friday after the government in the Gulf archipelago announced that the country had been hit by a wave of bombings and arson attacks.

The Bahraini army said for the first time on Saturday that it was ready to intervene to end the disturbances.

"The Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) is in a state of top readiness to carry out its security role ... by taking needed military measures to resolve the situation once and for all and put an end to all acts that violate security," said a Bahrain Defence

Ministry statement carried by the official Gulf News Agency.

The tough warning was issued following a meeting attended by the head of the 8,000-strong BDF, Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Ben Isa Al Khalifa, Defence Minister Major-General Sheikh Khalifa Ben Ahmad Al Khalifa and other senior officers.

The statement said the BDF "is closely watching the security situation" in the country.

The Shiite majority in Sunni-ruled Bahrain, the Gulf's main financial centre, have been locked in clashes with the government since December 1994 over demands for the restoration of a parliament dissolved in 1975.

At least 13 civilians and three policemen have been killed and hundreds arrested since disturbances first erupted. Some were later released.

Bahrain "is facing a terrorist plot aimed at shaking stability" and the military is prepared to carry out any orders by the country's leadership and in line with Bahraini laws "especially the martial law," the statement added.

Following clashes on Thursday Bahrain accused "foreign-backed" protesters of conducting a terrorist plot. It did not name a country or an organisation.

The Interior Ministry announced Saturday there had been 43 arson attacks the previous night, as well as five explosions set off using gas cylinders, attacks on security forces and an illegal demonstration.

The violence continued into Saturday and an unspecified number of arrests were made, the ministry said in a statement.

"The security forces man-

aged to control the situation and stood up firmly to the agitators, arresting some of them who have been interrogated by the authorities," it said, calling on the public to cooperate with police to "defeat the troublemakers' plans."

The ministry had broken with its usual silence on Friday, reporting 38 incidents on Thursday night including fires, explosions and demonstrations.

The two Arabic-language local newspapers in the country of 350,000 inhabitants published pictures Saturday of burned cars, buses and electricity sub-stations.

One of the papers, Al Akbar Al Khaleej, spoke of "many acts of sabotage and terrorism" and said the security forces had arrested several suspects.

Bahrain also received backing for its stance on the unrest from Libya and the secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The GCC, which comprises Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, condemned the "acts of sabotage and subversion," in a statement issued in Riyadh.

It pledged its "total solidarity" to the Bahraini government, which it said was "capable of defeating the destructive plans of elements controlled by foreign parties."

The latest wave of unrest followed the detention of an opposition leader, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, after a homemade bomb exploded in a hotel during an international oil conference on Wednesday, without causing casualties.

Opposition figures contacted from Nicosia said he was placed under house arrest on Saturday, although there was no official confirmation.

Turkey holds 9 Black Sea hijackers

EREGLI, Turkey (Agencies) — Turkish police have detained five hijackers posing as passengers on a Black Sea ferry after a four-day ordeal for about 200 hostages on the ship ended peacefully, Anatolian news agency said on Saturday.

The agency said two Chechens and an ethnic Abkhaz from Georgia were among the five detained when police combed the 3,838-tonne ferry Avrasya at its mooring point near Istanbul.

Four fellow gunmen surrendered on Friday, ending the hijack staged in protest at Russia's assault on Chechen rebels.

The hostages filed off the vessel in Eregli under armed escort.

They were welcomed in the small port city by a crowd that included the mayor and a band playing folk music, and were whisked away to have lunch as guests of the town council. Later the mainly Russian passengers were to be questioned by police as part of the probe into the hijacking.

Their ordeal ended Friday with the four gunmen surrendering peacefully and throwing their weapons into the Bosphorus.

Police said a preliminary search of the ship had revealed only one pump-action gun.

No explosives were found on board the 3,838-tonne Avrasya ferry, despite the gunmen's threats to blow up the ship in Istanbul's busy Bosphorus waterway if Moscow continued its assault on Chechen rebels in a southern Russian village.

"Whatever they had, they presumably dumped them in the sea," a policeman said.

No one has been able to see the nine suspects since their capture, but Istanbul police told reporters they had all shaved off the heavy beards they had on the ship in

anticipation of a news conference promised but then withdrawn.

Police said the five detained Saturday were: Ceyhan Mollamehmetoglu, 25, and Abdul Rahman Buoscan, 29, both born in Chechnya, and Raki, Gisi-ba, 25, from Abkhazia.

The four who surrendered were all Turks and identified Friday as Mohammed Emin Tokcan, who led the hijacking, Erhan Coskin, Erdinc Tekir and Sedat Temiz.

Mr. Tokcan had said hours after the hijacking Tuesday that 50 people, many of them armed and all of Caucasian origin, were with him.

Non-aligned group presents draft on Sudan

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The six non-aligned countries in the U.N. Security Council on Friday presented a draft resolution demanding that Sudan extradite to Ethiopia three suspects in a recent attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Consultations on the document were not expected to start until Jan. 29, according to diplomats.

The draft "condemns the terrorist assassination attempt" against Mr. Mubarak. The incident occurred June 26 upon Mr. Mubarak's arrival in the Ethiopian capital for an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit.

The draft resolution "strongly deplores the flagrant violation of the sovereignty and integrity of Ethiopia and the attempt to disturb the peace and security of Ethiopia and the region as a whole."

It expressly supports statements made by the OAU demanding that the suspects be extradited. It calls upon Khartoum to "comply with those requests without further delay by handing over to Ethiopia for prosecution the three terrorists wanted in connection with the assassination attempt."

The document points out that Ethiopia and Sudan signed an extradition treaty in 1968.

It further urges Sudan to desist from "assisting, supporting and facilitating terrorist activities."

The draft resolution asks U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to seek, together with the OAU, Khartoum's cooperation and to present a report to the Security Council within 60 days.

The draft could still be amended. During consultations Friday, Russia reiterated its call for a more prudent and gradual approach, and indicated it would prefer a simple statement rather

than a full-blown resolution, according to diplomats.

Sudan has rejected claims it supports terrorism and said it was still searching for the suspects.

The non-aligned group in the Security Council comprises Botswana, Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras and Indonesia.

Sudan on Friday accused Ethiopia of launching cross-border raids and shelling villages as part of an intensified campaign to topple the Khartoum regime.

A statement issued by the embassy of Sudan in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi said positions inside Sudan were now occupied by the Ethiopian military who had massed tanks and troops along the two countries common border.

The statement said that Sudan had launched a formal complaint to the Security Council.

The letter demanded an immediate withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Sudanese territories and called on the Zenawi government to refrain from the use of force in settling regional disputes," it added.

Ethiopia has previously denied raiding Sudan.

The Sudanese statement accused Ethiopia of taking military action after accusing Khartoum of harbouring the three suspects wanted in connection with Mr. Mubarak assassination attempt.

The president of the Security Council said on Tuesday he would urge Sudan to comply with requests to extradite the men.

"There is a feeling that, so far as Sudan is concerned, there is perhaps more to be done in terms of complying with the requests of the Organisation of African Unity for the extradition of the three suspects, who are thought to be in Sudan," said council president Sir John Weston of Britain.



DEFIANT SETTLERS: A Palestinian watches as settlers march through the West Bank town of Hebron to the Ibrahim Mosque and back to protest against Palestinian elections on Saturday (see page one) (AFP photo)

Conduct of rulers an election issue

GAZA (R) — The guard at the gate, a Palestinian policeman with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, takes identity cards, laboriously fills in forms, contacts his boss inside and finally issues a pass to the visitor.

Lowly applicants, come in the hope of carrying out banal bureaucratic transactions in this government office, jostle around his desk. Others, confident of their superior status, push to the front of the scrum and pass through quickly.

"It's the Egyptian way," says one of those waiting. Along the Gaza coast road, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's motorcade was approaching. "It's forbidden," the policeman bluntly told drivers trying to turn in from the side streets.

Police cars with flashing lights cleared the rubble off the road and Mr. Arafat's big black car roared past, escorted by eight powerful motorbikes. The wheels,

ploughing through the potholes, sent sheets of muddy water onto the pavements.

On the eve of elections for a Palestinian council, scenes like these had turned many Gazans against their new rulers, despite their hatred of the Israelis they replaced.

"Under the Israelis, the Palestinian at least felt free within himself. Not any longer because the secret police are following him everywhere," one woman told an election meeting by the opposition Democratic National Alliance, to loud applause from the rest of the audience.

"We don't need 11,000 security men or all these fancy cars and so on. The first step the council takes must be to withdraw Arafat's checkbook," added alliance member Ghazi Abu Jayeb.

Bribery, corruption, favouritism and mismanagement figure large on the list of its candidates to the council were promising to combat, though few would go into

details. Islamist candidates took the same line, saying that new government jobs had gone exclusively to people known to be loyal supporters of Mr. Arafat and his political movement Fatah.

"The financial management (by the Palestinian National Authority) has been a complete failure, the government agencies overlap, they deal with things they should have nothing to do with and many decent people have been detained," candidate Abdul Fatah Al Nouri told Reuters.

Journalists have been harassed for upsetting the authority. A prominent editor was detained for ignoring an official request to publish a story about Mr. Arafat on the front page.

"The people in authority don't understand what a free press means. Those who come in from outside (when self-rule started in 1994) had spent their lives in Arab countries and that was the

model they adopted," one Gaza journalist said.

Opposition candidates said they hoped the elections on Saturday would tame the tendency of the authorities towards arrogant autocracy, rather than legitimise their conduct.

"It's difficult to imagine the elections making Yasser Arafat more dictatorial," said Haidar Abdul Shafi, one of the most prominent opponents of the self-rule agreements.

"In the end it all depends on the extent to which the public keeps monitoring what is taking place. It would be disastrous if the elections enshrined autocracy," he said.

Fathi Abu Gaynas, a disabled, unemployed driver living in a corrugated-iron hut near Gaza's Jabalya refugee camp, said it would be pointless to vote for an opposition candidate.

"Why would I do that? We need services... and it's only the authority that can provide them," he said.

Employment is a big demand in self-rule election

GAZA (R) — Trapped in a strip of land smaller than many cities and dependent on Israel for almost everything they buy, the one million people of Gaza have found Palestinian self-rule a mixed blessing for their wallets.

The opportunities for work in Israel fluctuate at Israel's whim, legal and political ambiguities have put a damper on hopes of massive investment and many Gazans say they have not yet seen the effects of foreign assistance.

"Self-rule hasn't done anything for us," said Abdul Aziz Saad, a driver who works inside Israel whenever he can eight days in a bad month, 15 days a month when times are good.

"Everyone goes looking for work but the answer's always the same — no work," says his friend Mahmoud Ziyad, who lives next door to Mr. Saad's corrugated-iron hovel just outside Gaza City.

Unemployment was a big issue in elections for a Palestinian parliament on Saturday but there are no easy solutions and the candidates had only the vaguest notion of how to tackle it.

"They blame alternately Israel, their own Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the international community of donors, who pledged \$2.4 billion in 1994 for the Gaza Strip and West Bank."

"We have achieved much but it's below the level required," said Abdul Rahman Hamad, a candidate for the Fatah movement of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, defending the authority's record.

"We wanted to get lots of foreign aid but the amount has been very meagre, enough for a few infrastructure projects. We have to encourage Palestinian, Arab and foreign investment and that requires certain elements," he added.

The notion of international miserliness is widespread — one voter told an election

meeting that the donors had "tricked" Palestinians with promises of plenty.

But the office of the U.N. special coordinator in the occupied territories disputes this explanation.

Rick Hooper, the coordinator's chief of staff, said donors had disbursed \$300 million since October 1993, one third of it to cover the budget deficit of the PNA.

The biggest economic blow since self-rule began, he said, was Israel's closure of the territories in spring last year. "Without the donor support and the salaries they were paying to the Palestinian police and civil servants, the effect would have been much more drastic," he said.

"Since the summer (of 1995) the economy has begun a gradual upswing. But it's very slow and fragile — a closure (of the crossing into Israel) can knock it off balance," he added.

The U.N. solution is to persuade Israel to make life easier for Palestinians to work in the Jewish state and to trade with anyone they want, without however questioning the security arguments Israel uses for imposing restrictions.

"If you resolved some of these issues, you could increase economic activity 50 per cent in six months," Mr. Hooper said.

Parliamentary candidates agree that the Israeli economic stranglehold, widely seen as a devious form of protectionism, is the biggest single obstacle to development.

"What we have to do is break the Israeli hegemony over the economy by ending Israeli control of our imports and exports so that we are free to market our products abroad," said Abdul Fatah Al Nouri, an Islamist candidate for parliament.

Under the present system, all trade passes through Israeli hands, businessmen cannot travel easily and there are tough restrictions on the movement of trucks across political lines.

Mrs. Shbeilat appeals to prime minister

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — The lawyers and the wife of the president of the Jordan Engineers Association, Leith Shbeilat, who is accused of lese majeste, have appealed to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to look into what they described as violations of Mr. Shbeilat's basic rights.

Addressing the prime minister, Rima Shbeilat said that Jordanians of all classes knew Mr. Shbeilat's "honesty and courage" in telling the truth... and his struggle against the policies of the International Monetary Fund and its famine reform plans."

His place is not in prison, the country and the people need people like Leith," Mrs. Shbeilat said in a letter addressed to the prime minister on Saturday. She charged that her husband's arrest and trial were motivated by political reasons.

Mr. Shbeilat was arrested Dec. 9 on charges of slandering His Majesty King Hussein and Queen Noor and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. He is also accused of distributing state-

ments that are considered offensive to Their Majesties, undermining the country's financial status and shaking confidence in the Jordanian dinar. The charges carry a maximum sentence of three years.

Mr. Shbeilat was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1993 for charges of plotting against state. He was released following a royal pardon.

In her letter to the prime minister, Mrs. Shbeilat charged that her husband was being held in poor conditions and receiving poor treatment and that he was still being denied the right to meet with his lawyer in private.

Mr. Shbeilat's lawyer, Jawad Yunis, had told the Jordan Times that he had filed several requests for bail and for a meeting with his client privately but they were turned down.

Mr. Shbeilat's defence team withdrew from the State Security Court session on Thursday because the court refused to grant them the right to a private meeting with Mr. Shbeilat before the start of the legal proceedings, the lawyers said. After the lawyers' withdrawal, the

court, formed of three civil judges, resumed the session but Mr. Shbeilat refused to talk with the absence of his lawyers," witnesses said.

The session was adjourned until today. The defence team sent an "open letter" to the prime minister to protest of what they described as violations of their defendant's right to a fair trial.

The letter, signed by lawyers Mohammad Tarawneh, Mohammad Rashdan, Rasmi Khazai, Ahmad Najdawi, Radwan Nawayesh and Mr. Yunis, said the lawyers had made repetitive demands for a private meeting with their client but all were denied. They described that as a violation of the

defence's sacred right for which Jordan was committed after its "ratification of the international conventions on human rights."

The prime minister's office told the Jordan Times that they had not received such a letter.

In another statement faxed to the Jordan Times, Mr. Shbeilat's defence team said that a case they filed last week in the State Security Court, charging that the judges assigned to rule in the case were not qualified, was overruled by the court, despite the fact that two other courts, the Court of First Instance and the court of Cassation, had not ruled on their litigation yet.

Settlers mistreat observer

(Continued from page 1)
the approaches and around the city.

Dr. Majali, who toured election centres in Ramallah, Bireh, Shufat, Beit Hanina and Qalandia, said the Palestinians had to put up with such difficulties for the sake of electing a legislative council.

He said that in areas where no Israeli forces were present the elections went on smoothly and quietly with good order and discipline.

Dr. Majali said that the Jordanian team was preparing reports about the elections. The reports will be submitted to the head office of the international observers at a meeting on Sunday.

U.K. under Eurofire over Saudi dissident

STRASBOURG (R) — The European Parliament accused Britain on Friday of sacrificing human rights on the altar of its economic interests.

In a resolution condemning the British government's decision to expel Saudi dissident Mohammed Masari, the assembly said it was "deeply aware of the importance of Saudi Arabia as a source of oil and a trading partner for European Union (EU) member states."

But it rejected "the idea that concern with human rights should be disregarded or suppressed to safeguard economic interests."

It defended the right of Mr. Masari, who has waged a publicity campaign against the Saudi royal family since entering Britain last year, to "advocate reforms peacefully" and said all the member states should fully uphold the right of asylum "for genuine political dissidents."

The British government has indicated that it decided to expel Mr. Masari after Saudi Arabia made clear it could pull out of weapons contracts with Britain unless

he was removed.

The decision enraged human rights groups and opposition parties which accused the government of putting commercial interests above the rights of free speech.

But Prime Minister John Major said Mr. Masari had "used his hospitality in this country to wage a campaign to try to bring down the Saudi Arabian regime."

The non-binding European Parliament resolution urged EU ministers to tell the Saudi authorities they must take urgent measures to stop the "serious, widespread and increasing violation of basic human rights in Saudi Arabia."

Mr. Masari, who has lodged an appeal contesting his expulsion, said on Thursday he was talking to his lawyers about the possibility of moving to Germany or Japan.

He said his London-based group, the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, would not be deterred even if he left Britain.

"We just bring facts to light and give them to the people of Saudi Arabia,"

Court to issue verdict on Abu Rishteh Feb. 4

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The State Security Court on Saturday heard the closing argument of the defence in the case of Atta Abu Rishteh, accused of slandering His Majesty King Hussein, opening the way for the court to review the case before announcing its verdict on Feb. 4.

Mr. Abu Rishteh, 43, spokesman of the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir Party, was arrested on Oct. 15, nine days after he was interviewed by Al Hiwar weekly in which he allegedly slandered King Hussein. He is also charged with belonging to an illegal organisation.

In his one-hour closing argument, defence lawyer Abdul Fatah Lafi asked the court not to admit as evidence Mr. Abu Rishteh's confession that he slandered the King.

According to Mr. Lafi, his client should not be charged for statements he made under interrogation.

"The prosecution should only charge my client for his

remarks before the questioning, not after or while being interrogated," he told the court.

Mr. Lafi asked the court to acquit his client of all charges because, he said, his client did not slander the King and his interview was based on Islamic Sharia.

Defence witnesses included Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi and Sheikh Abdul Aziz Khayat. The defence sought to prove through the clergyman's testimony that Mr. Abu Rishteh's statements in the interview were based on interpretations of the Islamic Sharia.

In his summation last week, State Prosecutor Major Mahmud Obeidat asked for the conviction of Mr. Abu Rishteh.

Maj. Obeidat produced a confession by Mr. Abu Rishteh, evidence (the newspaper interview) and one witness, editor of Al Hiwar weekly Adullah Bani Issa, against the defendant.

If found guilty, Mr. Abu Rishteh could receive up to three years imprisonment.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:30 The Flintstones
14:35 Droopy Master Detective
15:00 Family Pethouse
15:10 Mac and Muley
15:30 Pugwilt's Summer
16:00 Voyagers
17:40 Children's Programme — Ord
17:50 Serie — Les Compagnons De
18:00 Magazine — Envoye Special
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Are You Being Served
20:00 Cinema, Cinema
20:25 Hawaii Five-O (drama)
21:10 Doc. — Women and the World
21:20 News in English
21:35 Heartbeat
22:25 Counterstrike
23:15 The American Chart Show
23:59 Series — Stay Lucky

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
06:27 Sunrise/Dhuhr
11:57 Dhuhr
14:38 Asr
17:03 Maghrib
18:23 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swatfeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Taramacha Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 635226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies sunny to partly cloudy and winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 1 / 12
Aqaba 8 / 20
Dorsets 0 / 13
Jordan Valley 6 / 18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 11, Aqaba 18 Humidity readings: Amman 65 per cent, Aqaba 27 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mublihas Mazahrah 820425
Dr. Ramzi Masawi 894788
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shikhal 752405
Dr. Khalid M'adi 743500
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asopra pharmacy 676155
Naroukh pharmacy 623612
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmisan pharmacy 671660
Nairouh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 647632
BRID:
Dr. Ahmed Qanu 281741

Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Harzallah 988075
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843403
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605880
Police Complaints 661726
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 631011
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-532200
Queen Alia Int'l Airport 08-532200
ZARQA:
Akilich Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmisan 6641648
Shmisan Hospital 667071
ZARQA:
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musaher Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Abul, Abdali 6641648
Italian, Al-Muhajres 771012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Mayka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 607155

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
07:30 Aqaba (RJ)
08:30 Beirut (RJ)
09:30 Casablanca (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:35 Vienna, Rome (RJ)
12:15 Athens (RJ)
20:25 New Delhi (RJ)
20:35 Jeddah (RJ)
21:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:45 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:45 Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Seoul (RJ)
23:40 Cairo (RJ)
23:45 Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:40 Sanaa (YF)
12:40 Bahrain (GF)
14:40 Doha (GF)
14:30 Moscow (SU)
20:10 Beirut (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
23:59 London, Beirut (BA)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Aqaba (RJ)
08:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
10:30 Tunis (RJ)
11:25 Casablanca (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15 Vienna, Rome (RJ)
20:25 New Delhi (RJ)
20:35 Jeddah (RJ)
21:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:45 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:45 Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Seoul (RJ)
23:40 Cairo (RJ)
23:45 Damascus (RJ)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Opposhoer price in file per kg.

Apple 700 / 500
Banana 650/650
Banana (Mukamar) 580/580
Banana (imported) 850/700
Cabbage 80 / 50
Carrot 220/150
Cauliflower 100/50
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 200
Eggplant 900/650
Grape Fruit 220/150
Lemon 300/200
Marrow (large) 80 / 50
Marrow (small) 130 / 80
Onion (green) 120/80
Onion (dry) 200 / 150
Orange 380/450
Pepper (hot) 480 / 300
Pepper (sweet) 480/300
Potato 230/150
Radish 130/80
String Beans 300 / 250
Spanish 120 / 80
Tomato 120/80

Ambassador Foundation ends operations Princess Sarvath recognises organisation's contributions

By Alia Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ambassador Foundation, a non-governmental organisation that has worked closely with several of its Jordanian counterparts in the fields of handicap and special education, will end its operations in Jordan by July because of financial difficulties, said Joseph Locke, vice-president of the foundation.

In a meeting with several members of the press at the office of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, Dr. Locke said all assistance to the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA), the Al Hussein Foundation for the Physically Handicapped, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Amman Baccalaureate School (ABS), will be terminated within the next six months.

The foundation, which opened a branch in Jordan in 1983 after consultation with Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, was established in 1975 by the Worldwide Church of God aiming to help people in need, said Dr. Locke.

Although the foundation is a Christian one, added Dr. Locke, its assistance is purely humanitarian, transcending religious lines.

Dr. Locke said the Ambassador Foundation, which is funded by the Worldwide Church of God and individual donations, began facing major financial constraints after the death of Joseph Tkach, former chairman of the foundation, in September of last year. Dr. Locke added that since Mr. Tkach's death, funds for the church have decreased considerably, bringing about a large reduction in allocations available to the foundation.



in Jordan.

The foundation, which has over 15 different programmes in both developed and developing countries, will shut down its facilities and end its assistance in these countries due to the current financial difficulties, added Dr. Locke, who, along with Daniel Thompson, director of Jordanian projects, were later received by Princess Sarvath.

Among the programmes of the foundation in Jordan are the provision of volunteers at the Al Hussein Foundation for the Physically Handicapped, and the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, to assist at both the Jubilee School for gifted students and the National Music Conservatory.

The YMWA centre for special education, founded in 1974 under the presidency of Princess Sarvath, receives technical assistance as well as volunteers from the Ambassador Foundation. The centre also has a vocational training programme which, according to Ghisoon A. Kureh, director of the YMWA centre for special education,

"owes the Ambassador Foundation the success of (its) programme which is considered a pioneer in the area."

The YMWA Sheltered Workshop set up in 1987, also under the presidency of Princess Sarvath, is operated with assistance from volunteers provided by the Ambassador Foundation. The workshop attempts to provide a training and working place for graduates of the vocational programme at the Centre for Special Education.

The volunteers, currently numbering 21, are students from The Ambassador University in Texas. They are either in their senior year or are doing graduate studies.

The foundation has also recruited Physical Education instructors for the ABS.

The Ambassador foundation also provided funding and staff to assist in major archaeological excavations in Jordan, especially in the Um Al Jmal area northeast of the Kingdom.

Queen Noor distributes land deeds to Petra's Bdoul tribe, inaugurates the Johann Ludwig Burckhardt Centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday distributed land deeds to 106 members of Petra's Bdoul tribe and inspected their accommodations at Umm Sayhoun, a Royal Court statement said.

The Bdoul tribe, who had been living in the archaeological city of Petra until 1985, were resettled in the village of Umm Sayhoun, which was built by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Bank and the Jordanian government.

The government, and particularly the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, have worked for the last 11 years to register the land and houses in the Bdoul tribe's name.

In his speech, Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Khatib said plans are being formulated to provide for the future needs of the village so that its development will complement the promotion of sustainable tourism in Petra, the statement said.

Later, Queen Noor inaugurated the Johann Ludwig Burckhardt Archaeological Centre, previously known as Camp Nazzal, and attended a presentation by three Jordanian specialists on the conservation of biodiversity in Petra.

Camp Nazzal, which was established in 1934 by the travel agency "Thomas Cook & Sons," was sold to Anton Nazzal, the owner of the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman, in 1936. In 1980, the camp, which has housed many distinguished visitors such as the famous mystery writer Agatha Christie, was returned to the Department of Antiquities and has been used ever since as a "dig house" for visiting archaeological missions.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday distributes a land deed to a member of the Bdoul tribe in Petra (Photo by Crystal)

Last May, Petra National Trust (PNT), a society for the preservation of the antiquities, cultural heritage and environment of the Petra region, the Department of Antiquities and the government of Switzerland began a 10-month project for the comprehensive renovation of the Nazzal Camp.

The project, which was finished in a record four months time, was financed by a JD 150,000 grant from the Bilateral Committee of the Jordanian-Swiss Counterpart Fund, the statement said. The camp was subsequently named after the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, who rediscovered Petra for the West in 1812 and converted to Islam assuming the name of "Sheikh Ibrahim ibn Abdul-lah".

In her remarks, Queen Noor, who is the honorary president of PNT, expressed her appreciation for "the innovative funding from the Jordanian-Swiss Counterpart Fund, which represents a constructive way of facilitating Jordanian foreign debt reduction," the statement said.

She added that the inauguration of the centre continues Petra's well-established legacy of cross-cultural partnership and its role as a meeting place of people from throughout the world, it said.

The president of PNT, His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, said PNT was entrusted with the complete restoration of the centre, which was an example of "successful cooperation between government and non-government agencies, donors and the private sector," the statement said.

Ambassador of Switzerland G.F. Pedotti said Johann Ludwig Burckhardt combined during his life "the spirit of humanism" and expressed his hope that "the same spirit of respect and humanism will continue to guide the future archaeological missions and scholars who will work and live in this new archaeological centre," said the statement.

The director of antiquities, Ghazi Bisheh, said the centre, "served and will continue to serve as headquarters for international teams excavating in Petra, thus embodying the ancient spirit of openness and cooperation, which characterised this wonderful city in its heyday," according to the statement.

Johann Ludwig Burckhardt's grandson and President of the Burckhardt Foundation Urs Burckhardt expressed his pride that Jordan has held "the name of Burckhardt in such high esteem," thus honouring the man who put "oriental studies on a new track and laid the groundwork for archaeology, ethnography and anthropology," the statement said.

After the inauguration ceremony, the statement added, Queen Noor and the minister of tourism visited a waste water treatment plant at one of the hotels in Petra and emphasised the critical need for the installation of such plants in all the major hotels of the area.

Her Royal Highness Princess Majda Ra'd accompanied Queen Noor on her visit, the statement said.

Road accident victims to be treated free of charge upon King's directives

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein has instructed the government to provide free medical treatment to people who were injured in two road accidents on the Azraq road on Jan 18 and 19, Health Minister Aref Bataineh said Saturday.

Speaking during a visit to Al Bashir Hospital, where the injured people are being treated, the minister said that most of the people who were hurt in the accidents had been discharged from hospital.

The minister instructed doctors at the hospital to give the injured due medical attention until they are discharged.

The Health Ministry said that 57 passengers have been discharged from hospital but eight others are

still undergoing treatment and are expected to leave hospital in two days.

In the first accident in the Azraq area on Wednesday, two bus passengers were killed and 33 others were injured. That accident involved two buses with Saudi licence plates and a Syrian registered truck. The passengers were Saudi, Bahraini, Palestinian and Syrian nationals.

In the second accident on the Azraq-Omari road near the Saudi-Jordanian border, two people were killed and 40 injured. Their bus, which had Saudi plates, overturned on the road.

Some of the passengers who suffered serious injuries have been undergoing treatment at the King Hussein Medical Centre.

ARA to launch programme to protect marine environment, combat pollution

AQABA (J.T.) — The Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) is teaming up with the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society (JREDS) to protect the marine environment and combat pollution in the Aqaba region, according to an official announcement Saturday.

With a \$50,000 from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and technical assistance from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, the ARA and JREDS will launch what they call the "Comprehensive Public Awareness and Coral Reef Rehabilitation Research and Conservation Programme."

In announcing the programme, ARA President Faysal Khasawneh said the planned projects are part of a national programme aimed at safeguarding the environment in the Gulf of Aqaba.

JREDS will cooperate with the Aqaba Marine Science Station, the ARA, the navy, the Aqaba Ports Corporation, the Royal Diving Centre and other local organisations.

According to Dr. Khasawneh, the project, aims at conserving the biodiversity of the area, reducing pollution to international waters, educating the public on the importance of

Jordan's marine environment and advancing the knowledge and understanding of the sea through the promotion of scientific research, data gathering and training programmes on the national and regional levels.

In addition, Dr. Khasawneh said the ARA is involved in the creation of a national peace park on the shores of the Red Sea. The \$2 million project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the form of technical assistance, buildings for management and a visitors centre.

The park project, according to Dr. Khasawneh, entails extending facilities and services to beaches along seven kilometres on the southern coast. Such services are to include maritime services, diving and swimming zones, recreational and tourist boats areas and facilities for ensuring full protection to the coral reefs and other natural and marine wealth.

ARA will assume full responsibility for managing and supervising the maritime park, Dr. Khasawneh said, adding that a training course for personnel has already started on means of guaranteeing the safety of tourist boats, divers and swimmers.

The joint company serves as an umbrella for the White Cement Factory set up in southern Jordan and a wall-to-wall carpeting factory, located in Syria.

Mr. Abul Ragheb will co-chair the board and general assembly meetings of the company along with Ahmed Nitham Al Deen, the Syrian minister of Industry. The meetings will discuss topics connected with the company's activities during 1995 and plans for the coming years.

The Damascus talks are the first by the two sides since a Syrian-Jordanian meeting held in Amman last August when senior officials from the two countries signed an agreement to regulate overland transportation.

Abul Ragheb to attend Jordanian-Syrian company meetings

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb Saturday arrived in Damascus for a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with Syrian officials and attend a meeting of the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Industrial Company.

Mr. Abul Ragheb will co-chair the board and general assembly meetings of the company along with Ahmed Nitham Al Deen, the Syrian minister of Industry. The meetings will discuss topics connected with the company's activities during 1995 and plans for the coming years.

The joint company serves as an umbrella for the White Cement Factory set up in southern Jordan and a wall-to-wall carpeting factory, located in Syria.

Mr. Abul Ragheb will also co-chair a meeting of the general assembly of the Joint Free Trade Zone Company along with Syrian Minister of Economy and External Trade Mohammad Imadi to discuss company issues, endorse next year's plans for the company's investments and expand the free



Ali Abul Ragheb

trade zone operations.

Mr. Abul Ragheb will discuss with Dr. Imadi Jordanian-Syrian economic relations and will conduct a revision of the bilateral economic agreement signed in 1975 and the protocols emanating from that agreement.

The Damascus talks are the first by the two sides since a Syrian-Jordanian meeting held in Amman last August when senior officials from the two countries signed an agreement to regulate overland transportation.

Man kills himself after shooting wife in front of four-year old son

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 28-year-old man, whom official reports described as mentally ill, Friday shot and killed his wife following an argument, then committed suicide in his house in the Nazzal suburb, official reports said.

According to a Public Security Department (PSD) report, Hani Saleh Hasounneh quarrelled with his wife Yasmin Khamis, 25, became angry and shot her twice in the head and chest, then shot himself in the head.

The reports said that the couple's four-year-old child, who was the only witness to the incident, told police that he heard his parents arguing "when he saw his father shooting his

mother, then shooting himself."

Police said they seized the gun used in the incident and were investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, one person died and eight, all from the same family, were listed in fair condition Thursday, after inhaling carbon monoxide in the Hussein suburb in Mafrqa, according to PSD and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

The reports said that a next-door neighbour of the family heard one of the children cry and when she went to check the matter she found all nine family members unconscious and the smell of gas in the room.

A police official told the Jordan Times Saturday that preliminary investigations

indicated that "apparently gas was emitting from the (kitchen) stove and spread through the house."

At the same time, the official added, there was not enough air circulating in the room.

The CDD report identified the deceased as Ayman Thafi Kayed, 15. The remaining eight family members, including their 35-year-old mother, were taken to Mafrqa Government Hospital.

In Amman, two people were killed and two were listed in fair condition early Saturday morning following a road collision at the Fourth Circle intersection, PSD and CDD reports said. The accident brought the total number of people killed in road accidents in the past 72 hours to six. Dozens more were injured

in the same time span.

According to CDD reports, the accident, which occurred at 6:00 a.m., involved a vehicle driven by a 43-year-old man and a bus driven by Ibrahim Zawahreh, 47.

Official sources said that the accident occurred as both vehicles were speeding and ran a red light, slamming into each other.

The strong impact caused the death of the driver of the vehicle, Taysir Da'Jeh, and Ahmad Okab Mohammad, 44, who was riding with him, the CDD report said.

The driver of the bus, who was accompanied by his wife Fatmeh Mustafa, 33, suffered from fractures and bruises. They were taken to Shmeisani Hospital and were listed in good condition.

PLAYS

* "Unclothing and the Horse's Move" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

* "Ramadan Supermarket" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Graphic works by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh (until Feb. 18).

* Contemporary and Traditional Jewellery at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141) (until Jan. 31).

* Water colours by several German artists at Goethe-Institut (until Jan. 21).

* Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina (until Feb. 6).

* Paintings by artist Raphael Chabrol at the French Cultural Centre (until Jan. 31).

JOB OPPORTUNITY

AN INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY, BASED IN JORDAN IS SEEKING A FRENCH-UNIVERSITY GRADUATE (MALE/FEMALE) IN PHARMACY OR SCIENCE.

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES MAY SEND THEIR C.V. TO FAX NO. 817102, OR CALL TEL : 865882,3,4 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER.

Russia says troops caught 9 more Chechen hostage takers

MOSCOW (R) - Russian forces caught another nine Chechen rebels trying to flee the aftermath of a bloody hostage crisis in southern Russia, raising the number of guerrillas captured to 39, Interfax News Agency said Saturday.

It quoted a spokesman for Russian forces in Chechnya as saying 10 rebels had tried to leave the village, Pervomayskoye, Friday, but one rebel was killed and nine men, a grenade launcher and six guns seized.

Interfax, reporting from the Chechen capital Grozny, did not say if "lone wolf" rebel leader Salman Raduyev was among them. The report could not be independently confirmed.

President Boris Yeltsin said Friday that 153 rebels had been killed and 30 captured out of a force of 300 who raided the town of Kizlyar and took dozens of hostages to Pervomayskoye near the Chechen border.

At least 43 civilians died in the crisis, Pervomayskoye was demolished by Russian

artillery, which pounded the village for three days, allowing Russian forces to seize it Thursday and leaving the mangled bodies of Chechen rebels lying in ditches.

But at least half the rebels, apparently including Raduyev, managed to flee and slip over the border into Chechnya.

Mr. Yeltsin said Russian casualties totalled 27 soldiers killed and 93 injured. He said earlier that 82 of about 100 captives had been freed by Russian forces.

Meanwhile Chechen guerrillas are still holding hostages taken in Dagestan and are treating them as prisoners of war, top rebel Commander Aslan Maskhadov said Saturday.

"The hostages, whom we call prisoners of war, such as Omon (special forces), soldiers and policemen, are alive and well and being held on Chechen territory," he said.

Commander Maskhadov would not say how many were being held, but that if any civilian hostages had

been taken from the Dagestani village of Pervomayskoye into neighbouring Chechnya, they would be released.

"We told the Dagestani authorities that we are ready to give them all the hostages. Only the PoWs will stay with us. They can come and take their hostages any time," Commander Maskhadov said in the eastern Chechen town of Novogrozny.

"The PoWs will be sorted out as PoWs," he said. "We had three of ours taken prisoner there (in Dagestan) and we need to free them."

Chechen guerrillas, who took about 150 hostages in the southern Russian Republic of Dagestan, broke out of encircling Russian troops before dawn Thursday and fought their way to the border.

Most of the guerrillas made it home, Commander Maskhadov said.

"Our figures are that 20 fighters died, the rest are in Chechnya. There were a lot of wounded," he said. Dagestan was mourning

Saturday for the victims of the hostage drama.

Dagestan's legislature decided Friday that national flags should be lowered and all entertainments cancelled until Sunday in memory of those who died in raids on the town of Kizlyar and the village of Pervomayskoye by Chechen gunmen.

As Dagestan counted its dead, Turkish officials managed Friday to persuade a group of pro-Chechen gunmen to release some 200 hostages, mostly Russians, seized on a ferry Tuesday in the Black Sea port of Trabzon.

The seven or eight gunmen gave themselves up to Turkish authorities, ending a four-day crisis during which they threatened to blow up themselves and the hostages.

Interfax News Agency quoted Dagestan officials as saying 35 people were killed in Kizlyar and another eight in Pervomayskoye.

This figure did not include casualties among the hostages in Pervomayskoye.

The head of Dagestan's Legislative Council, Magomedali Magomedov told Interfax that 95 per cent of houses in Pervomayskoye, once a home for 300 families, were completely destroyed while all others were badly damaged.

Leading newspapers unleashed Friday a barrage of criticism saying the violent storm of Pervomayskoye was unnecessary.

But the State Duma, the newly-convened lower house of parliament, threw out a motion to discuss the handling of the hostage crisis.

Mr. Yeltsin shrugged off media criticism.

"The operation was planned and carried out correctly," he said. "We grieve about this (casualties) but we had no other way out."



A wounded Chechen gunman lies on a hospital bed. The gunman was one of the Chechen rebels who escaped to Chechnya from the village of Pervomayskoye. Russian television said today, that Chechen rebel leader Salman Raduyev has escaped to Chechnya and is offering to swap the remaining hostages for the injured Chechen men abandoned at Pervomayskoye (Reuters photo)

U.K. queen loses patience with Diana and Fergie

LONDON (R) - After years of turning the other cheek to her errant daughters-in-law, Britain's long-suffering Queen Elizabeth is finally getting tough.

This week she said she would not bail out the Duchess of York, who is said by newspapers to have debts of up to £3 million (\$4.5 million). Last month, in a leaked letter, she urged Princess Diana to agree to a divorce from Prince Charles, the heir to the throne.

First there was Princess Diana.

At a shy and virginal 19 she seemed just what the royal family needed and her sumptuous wedding in 1981 to Prince Charles was a national triumph.

But Princess Diana quickly grew up, developing a taste for designer clothes and even displaying a personality. Before too long newspapers were reporting ructions in the royal marriage.

The red-haired Sarah Ferguson, nicknamed Fergie, crashed her way onto the sedate royal scene in 1986, when her confident, chummy ways were seen as a breath of fresh air.

But she was soon to become the most ridiculed royal, mocked for her full figure, garish clothes and love of the good life.

Shortly after her separation from Prince Andrew, photographs of her frolicking topless beside a swimming pool with a male companion, her two tiny daughters looking on, were splashed across newspaper front pages in a major embarrassment to the royals.

The queen was more puzzled than anything. "Her daughter-in-law's selfish have-it-all, grab-it-all attitude was simply alien to her," says a new biography of the queen.

Devoted to duty and trained to keep her woes

from view, the queen was incapable of understanding two modern young women who rallied against an institution that placed dignity above all.

But it was Princess Diana who, in Queen Elizabeth's eyes, committed the greatest sin against the royal family by revealing her marital troubles, via friends, to a tabloid reporter.

The resulting book, published in 1992, portrayed Princess Diana as the tragic victim of a loveless marriage. Prince Charles, brought up in traditionally distant royal style, was incapable of affection and, also in keeping with royal tradition, had a mistress.

The heir-to-the-throne later admitted his infidelity in a television interview.

But Queen Elizabeth clearly regarded it as the duty of a royal wife not to complain about such things.

Reports that her own husband, Prince Philip, has had affairs have been dismissed by her office "as recycled rumours" but she has borne with fortitude — in public at least — his interest in pretty women.

She expected her daughters-in-law to do the same. After all, they had royalty to thank for their celebrity and wealth.

But the queen faces a dilemma over what to do next.

Princess Diana, secure in her evergreen popularity, has told her mother-in-law she is in no hurry to divorce Prince Charles.

And while some legal and political advisers are telling the queen to strip Fergie and Princess Diana of their royal titles, others are warning against this.

"Buckingham Palace should think very carefully before turning its back on the Duchess of York," said Harold Brooks-Baker, an expert on the British aristocracy.

Rwanda genocide probe starts digging up graves

KIGALI (R) - Forensic scientists have begun digging up a mass grave by a Catholic Church in Rwanda to provide evidence for a U.N. tribunal investigating the 1994 genocide of a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus, officials said Saturday.

The exhumations began this week at a mass grave in the Western town of Kibuye.

The scale of the genocide and the vast number of mass graves scattered across the central African country make the exhumations in Rwanda one of the biggest in history.

"The whole country is a cemetery. There are hundreds of mass graves and new ones are being found. This will be the largest mass grave exhumation ever since Nazi concentration camps," a senior forensic expert of the tribunal told Reuters.

The three-month genocide unleashed by Hutu militias and soldiers backed by mobs and even children ended after Tutsi rebels swept to power in July 1994.

In Kibuye, a town on the shores of Lake Kivu, as many as 12,000 Tutsis — almost its entire Tutsi population — are believed to have been hacked to death in April 1994.

A 15-member team of anthropologists, archaeologists and forensic experts have begun the first exhumations in Kibuye at a mass grave outside a Catholic Church, where diggers have been working with picks and shovels since December.

Forensic anthropologists are archivists of death who try to solve murders using tape measures, calipers and other investigative methods and study fragments of skeletons to document evidence of violence.

It was forensic experts who contributed to history by finding the skeletal remains of the infamous and elusive Nazi Doctor Josef Mengele, the angel of death, in Brazil in 1985. They have also investigated killings in Argentina, El Salvador and Cambodia.

In a boost to tribunal efforts to match evidence with witness accounts of the genocide, volunteers led by a U.S. physicians' organisation, Physicians for Human Rights, will be exhuming the mass graves in Kibuye over the next five weeks.

Like archaeologists reassembling pieces of broken pottery, the experts will sift through skeletal remains, ribs, skulls and pelvic bones, piece them together and document the cause of death by studying bullet holes and machete and shrapnel marks.

"Witnesses can lie, but bones don't," said a tribunal official. "The exhumations will provide crucial evidence."

The tribunal, seated in Tanzania, indicted eight Rwandans on genocide charges in December for the killings in Kibuye.

Hundreds of bodies were dumped in the mass grave near the church, where militias hacked their victims to death with machetes and hunted down fleeing Tutsis with grenades after throwing burning tyres into the church to force people out.

The bodies will be X-rayed for signs of trauma and autopsied at a mobile morgue set up in Kibuye. Autopsies of the dead will provide scientific evidence to back prosecutors at trials which are expected to start later this year.

Defence lawyers are expected to challenge at court the very fact that a genocide took place in Rwanda.

The exhumations will provide clearer evidence on civilian killings but experts said it is unlikely anthropologists can tell the victims' ethnicity by studying their skull morphology.



The space shuttle Endeavour touches down at the Kennedy Space Centre Saturday, ending an eight-day satellite retrieval and scientific mission. It was the third night landing at the Space Centre (Reuters photo)

Shuttle lands at end of 9-day mission aimed at building space station

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AFP) - Space shuttle Endeavour returned here early Saturday making an unusual nighttime landing capping a nine-day mission focused on the planned international space station.

Endeavour landed at the Kennedy Space Centre here at 2:42 a.m. (0742 GMT), only the third night landing in U.S. shuttle history.

During the mission which began on Jan. 11, the six-man crew, including a Japanese astronaut, retrieved a Japanese satellite and deployed a scientific satellite.

But the mission's most spectacular jobs were two spacewalks, each more than six hours long, in which astronauts tested equipment and techniques that could be used in building the international space station.

During the first spacewalk, last Monday, Daniel Barry and Leroy Chiao tested a portable work platform designed to help future astronauts work in space by reducing time-wasting searches for materials and tools.

They also tested a system which should help astronauts remain stable in space and repaired the installation system for a 100-kilo (220-pound) cord that will furnish electrical current to the station.

On Wednesday Chiao was accompanied by Winston Scott on a second spacewalk. The pair took with them a special tool box designed to hold avionics equipment and tested a new tether to keep space workers from drifting away as they move about outside the future space station.

NASA scientists monitored the astronauts' every move to determine the most efficient movement and work environment that can be achieved in a state of weightlessness.

Chiao and Scott also tested space suits and thermal underwear that NASA hopes will keep astronauts warmer in the bone-chilling cold of space.

The first task on this mission was the

recovery Saturday of a three-tonne Japanese scientific satellite, launched last March by a Japanese rocket, that is to be brought back to Earth for study.

Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata operated the shuttle's robot, retrieving the Japanese spacecraft. Two malfunctioning solar panels on the satellite had to be jettisoned into space.

Wakata, 32, is the third Japanese astronaut to travel aboard a U.S. space shuttle, but the first to serve as mission specialist.

In a news conference Friday, Wakata expressed satisfaction with his work.

"I think I had a very valuable experience operating the robot arm," he said. His comments in Japanese were translated into English by an interpreter at Houston Space Centre, Texas.

"Of course I would like to do an EVA sometime," Wakata said, referring to extra vehicular activities — NASA lingo for spacewalks — "But I am satisfied with my work."

"The mission has been extremely successful," Commander Brian Duffy added.

On Sunday the crew launched a scientific satellite that conducted four separate experiments before being retrieved Tuesday.

The mission encountered a small problem with ice buildup in one of the shuttle's two cooling systems earlier in the week that threatened to cut short the space mission by a day, but the crew managed to melt the ice after the second spacewalk Wednesday.

Even though the ice problem had appeared in previous missions, NASA planned to bring home the shuttle Friday, instead of Saturday as scheduled, if it persisted.

The shuttle was forced to alter its course early in the mission to avoid coming too close to a satellite. Without this maneuver, the shuttle would have passed within 1.5 kilometre (0.93 mile) of a deactivated U.S. Air Force satellite, a proximity forbidden by NASA security regulations.

Forest fire moves towards Argentine city

BARILLOCHE, Argentina (AFP) - A raging forest fire advanced Friday on Catedral Hill outside this tourist city and threatened a neighbourhood and a ski resort at its base, officials said.

Tourists were evacuated to hotels in the area or private residences while employees helped to fight fires.

Firefighting crews, reinforced by army troops, were working late Friday to contain the fast-moving blaze being driven by fierce winds over tinder-dry vegetation.

The fire started in the afternoon, only hours after president Carlos Menem announced in Buenos Aires that firefighters had contained another forest fire in a nearby valley.

That fire destroyed about 2,000 hectares (5,000 acres) of forests in the Valle Del Chalhucano in the Nahuel Huapi National Park, which includes several ecologically unique forests with trees hundreds of years old.

According to local reporters, columns of flames as high as 30 metres (99 feet) and dense smoke were rising from the most popular tourist destination of the hills that ring Bariloche.

The fires are the latest in nearly three weeks of blazes that have destroyed several thousand acres of forests during the peak of Argentina's summer season, causing the greatest ecological damage in a decade.

The Environment Ministry reported to Mr. Menem earlier Friday that after 17 days of firefighting under often adverse weather conditions that the fires were contained.

and then fell with my child. We were both bleeding."

Speciose Nyandhi said from a hospital bed at Ngunduzi where aid agencies have set up an emergency centre.

Officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said they were treating 15 Rwandan Hutus, all with gunshot wounds, at the ICRC centre in Benaco Camp, Tanzania.

UNHCR officials corrected earlier reports which said some 100,000 refugees were on the move in Burundi, saying there were no further movements of refugees reported in the northern camps.

UNHCR official Colin Pryce said that between 12,000 and 14,000 Rwandan Hutus had crossed into Tanzania and reporters saw them huddled in makeshift camps at Ngunduzi settlement.

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Eastwood, TV presenter have marriage license

SAN FRANCISCO (R) - Clint Eastwood and television news presenter Dina Ruiz have obtained a marriage license but have not set a wedding date, Ms. Ruiz said Friday. "I will reluctantly confirm the published reports that we have a marriage license," Ms. Ruiz, 30, said in response to a reporter's question. But she said she and Eastwood, 65, the Oscar-winning star of such movies as *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*, *Dirty Harry* and *Unforgiven*, had not set a wedding date. Several British newspapers reported Friday that Eastwood, 65, and Ms. Ruiz planned to wed. Ms. Ruiz is a television news presenter at a television station in Salinas in central California, close to the coastal town of Carmel where Eastwood has a home. The two have dated for about a year, according to local journalists. Ms. Ruiz said she and Eastwood had obtained the marriage license in December, but would not say where. A couple usually obtains a marriage license from a county clerk and it is valid for one year in the state in which it is issued. The London Daily Mirror reported Friday that Eastwood applied for a marriage license while on holiday at his chalet in Hailey, Idaho. Ms. Ruiz has never been married, while Eastwood has had one previous marriage to Maggie Johnson which ended in divorce. Since then he has been romantically linked with a number of other women including actress Frances Fisher, with whom he had a baby.

Burns turns 100 but is too weak to celebrate

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Cigar-chomping actor and comedian George Burns, who has been a fixture in the U.S. entertainment world since the Vaudeville days, turns 100 Saturday but he will not be attending the celebrations in his honour. The combination of a July 1994 fall in his bathroom, in which he suffered head injuries, and a bout with the flu during the past couple of weeks has kept the wise-cracking show business legend at home. He skipped a star-studded dinner in his honour earlier this week at the dedication of a new Cedars-Sinai Medical Research Centre here in his honour and appearances planned for Las Vegas and London. The Las Vegas show at Caesars Palace sold out 18 months in advance despite the hefty \$100 price tag for tickets. Tickets were refunded when it was announced he would not appear. Burns' longtime manager Irving Fein said even though Burns couldn't attend the festivities, he continued to go to the office on most days, played bridge, smoked cigars and had an occasional alcoholic drink. Together with his wife of 38 years, Gracie Allen, the duo boned a comedy act that held up equally to the rigors of stage, radio and television performances, winning the loyalty of millions that spanned the generations.

Beijing bans dangerous toy, replica guns

BEIJING (R) - The Chinese capital has banned toy and replica guns that do not meet stringent safety standards, Xinhua News Agency said Saturday. Government inspectors found that only five of 24 brands sold on Beijing markets met minimum safety standards, the report said. The others were deemed highly dangerous, especially toy air guns that produced muzzle speeds of 50-80 m/sec (165-260 ft/sec) — enough to put out an eye or cause flesh wounds.

World

Police Kill

Bangladesh

Protesters rally

racism after G

TV: Britain urg

N. Ireland ar



Residents of Karachi look at the bodies of four people killed by unidentified persons Saturday. More than 70 people have been killed this month in ethnic, sectarian and political violence in Pakistan's biggest city. Police shot dead five Mohajir National Movement (MQM) activists Saturday, two policemen were wounded in the shoot-out and many weapons recovered (Reuters photo)

Police kill 5 MQM militants in Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Police shot dead five Mohajir National Movement (MQM) activists in Karachi Saturday and the bullet-riddled bodies of five other people were found elsewhere in the southern Pakistani port city, police said.

They said that five MQM members, including a leading militant named Rehman Kana, had been killed in a clash with police in district central's Khawja Ajmer Nagri area.

Two policemen were wounded in the shoot-out and many weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades, were recovered. The

men were all wanted by police.

MQM sources questioned the police account, but said they were waiting for full details of the incident.

The MQM has called for a strike Sunday in Sind province, of which Karachi is the capital, to protest at what it says is a pattern of torture and extra-judicial killings of its party workers by security forces.

Elsewhere in Karachi, four unidentified bodies were found shot dead in Zaman town in Korangi. All were blindfolded and bore marks of torture. Another corpse was found at Aziz

Bhatti in district east, police and ambulance workers said.

Police said there had been no claim of responsibility and it was not immediately clear who was behind the killings.

MQM Senator Ishtiaq Azhar Friday accused the security forces of killing four MQM party workers in the last few days.

"Only in the last few months about 100 workers have been murdered by (paramilitary) Rangers, police and other functionaries of the government," he added.

The government denies

that the security forces, which have been engaged in a long-running conflict with MQM militants, torture or kill their opponents in cold blood.

More than 70 people have been killed in Karachi this month and more than 1,950 died in ethnic, sectarian and political violence in Pakistan's biggest city last year.

The MQM is seeking greater rights for Karachi's majority Mohajirs — Urdu-speaking Muslims who fled to Pakistan from India at partition in 1947 and their descendants.

Bangladesh opposition wants army neutral in poll

DHAKA (R) — Major Bangladeshi opposition parties have asked President Abdur Rahman Biswas to send the army back to the barracks and urged people not to vote on Feb. 15 in what they described as a pre-decided election.

"Pull out the army and send them to barracks because we fear there may be an attempt to involve our national army in the farcical one-party election," they said in a statement following a meeting Friday night.

"We urge the president, who is supreme commander of the armed forces, to ensure that army's image is not put at stake through their use in an election the results of which have been pre-decided," they said.

The parties include the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina, the Jani Party headed by jailed ex-President Hossain Mohammad Ershad and the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami.

The army was deployed throughout Bangladesh on Jan. 1, at the request of the Election Commission, to help police to crack down on illegal arms and explosives ahead of the election.

The opposition has alleged that the troops were being used instead to hunt down government opponents.

Only the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and a host of fringe opposition groups, most of them previously unknown, are contesting the 300 parliament seats at stake in the poll.

Addressing an Awami rally near Dhaka Friday afternoon, Sheikh Hasina asked Bangladeshis not to "waste your right

to franchise" by participating in a poll she said was designed to perpetuate Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's rule.

"Rather you take a vow to resist such an election and attempts to turn democracy into a mockery," one party leader quoted Mrs. Hasina as saying.

Most opposition parties are boycotting the election in protest against Mrs. Khaleda's refusal to step down and allow a neutral caretaker administration to supervise the poll.

The opposition insists only this could ensure fair voting. Mrs. Khaleda, elected in 1991 in what was hailed as Bangladesh's first free poll, has rejected the demands as unconstitutional.

Many BNP activists who failed to obtain party tickets to run in the poll have stood as independent candidates, government officials said.

They said the BNP leadership considered them dissidents and was planning to crush their "revolt" by expelling them from the party or even sending them to jail.

Those opposition groups who have chosen to take part in next month's election have started to encounter protests.

Police arrested four people Friday after hundreds of protesters stormed a news conference by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to formally announce its decision to join the poll.

The protesters damaged the car of NDA chief retired army Colonel Abdur Rashid, police said.

Protesters rally against racism after German fire

LUEBECK, Germany (R) — More than 1,000 demonstrators rallied against racism in the north German city of Luebeck Saturday, two days after a fire killed 10 residents of a hostel for foreigners.

Some carried placards demanding Germany grant asylum to all refugees. Others blamed the German state for what they called the "racist and fascist massacre" in the hostel which housed refugees from Zaire, Togo, Syria and Lebanon and ethnic German immigrants from Poland.

The demonstrators, many of them Africans and Arabs, planned to march from a central market square to the burned-out building where investigators were still searching painstakingly for clues about how the fire began.

Forensic specialists have had no success so far in establishing what started the fire, the worst catastrophe ever to hit a home for asylum-seeking refugees in Germany, a Fire Department spokesman said.

Rescuers said they did not expect the death toll to rise further after four residents who had been listed as missing were found among victims of the blaze being treated in hospital.

TV: Britain urged to drop N. Ireland arms stance

DUBLIN (R) — A U.S.-led panel charged with breaking a stalemate in Northern Ireland peace-making will urge Britain to stop demanding that the IRA disarm before its spokesmen are allowed to join peace talks, according to a television report.

BBC Television's Newsnight programme said Friday the committee headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell will make the recommendation when it publishes its report for the British and Irish governments next Wednesday.

Instead it will recommend that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and its Protestant loyalist foes start surrendering their weapons in stages at the same time as round-table talks are held to forge a lasting Northern Ireland settlement.

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Snow meltdown causes big floods in U.S. east coast

WASHINGTON (R) — Another winter storm belted the United States Friday, this time adding torrents of rain and flooding to the woes of the previously snow-battered east as well as bitter cold in the Midwest.

Less than two weeks after massive snows paralyzed the northeast, unusually warm temperatures followed by strong winds and rain wiped away the white face of many cities and towns.

"What's been hurting the east has been the exceptionally mild air in front of the cold front," said Ken Reeves, senior meteorologist at Accuweather in State College, Pennsylvania. "The rain on top of about a foot of snow melting produced a tremendous amount of water."

State officials activated the National Guard in Pennsylvania and Virginia to help control flooding and rescue affected people. Some schools closed down, airports reported delays and hundreds of roads were submerged in murky brown water.

Unusually warm temperatures Friday, including highs of 55 F (13 C) in both New York and Boston, accelerated the melting throughout the region, according to the National Weather Service.

In Washington D.C., the rains ushered in the comprehensive snow removal programme city officials were unable to deliver despite innumerable promises over a two-week period. Even the White House earlier this week had noted ice still made walking around the nearby grounds rather hazardous for top officials.

In Pennsylvania, perhaps the most flood-threatened region, several inches of rain helped wipe away a foot of snow, Mr. Reeves said. Local officials said some people were rescued from their rooftops in western Pennsylvania Friday after flood waters invaded their homes.

Forecasters said that rivers and streams may reach their highest levels Saturday as the rains and melting snows continue downstream.

In New York City, winds gusting to nearly 60 mph (95 km) blew windows out of high rises, blew down scaffolding and knocked a large chunk of metal from the dome of the U.N. General Assembly building.

Residents of the upper midwest meanwhile dug out in the aftermath of the cold front that pushed through to the east after sending temperatures plunging. Wind chills were recorded at minus 80 F (minus 62 C) across northern Minnesota.

Sri Lankan troops smash Tamil rebel bases in east

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops on the third day of their latest offensive to flush Tamil guerrillas from eastern jungle hide-outs have destroyed some 25 rebel camps in the area, defence sources in the east said Saturday.

Troops in Operation Rivikirana captured several large camps and many smaller satellite camps without encountering much resistance from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the defence sources said.

"They (guerrillas) withdrew from camps as troops advanced and began firing mortars from far away," one source said.

One soldier lost his leg to a rebel anti-personnel mine and eleven more have been wounded since Rivikirana was launched Wednesday, he said.

The sources said the operation began on the border of the Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa districts, about 80 kilometres northwest of Batticaloa City.

Its aim is to smash LTTE hideouts that have sprung up in the east since the rebels regrouped in the area after the fall of their northern stronghold to the army last month.

The army captured Jaffna City, centre of a Tamil homeland in the north and east for which the rebels are

fighting, after a seven-week offensive.

The rebels have since carried out a series of attacks on the military in the east while cutting power supplies and disrupting transport.

Defence sources said one of the camps captured was a hospital used by the rebels to treat their wounded.

The military has launched limited operations in other parts of the east aimed at cutting off the rebels' access to towns and destroying their hideouts, they added.

The government says more than 50,000 people have died in the 12-year separatist war.

Meanwhile four Tamil political parties expressed disappointment Saturday with the Sri Lankan government's devolution proposals for minority Tamils, saying the proposals fell far short of accommodating Tamil aspirations.

Political analysts said the four parties wielded little influence over the Tamils and that those that did have yet to express their views on the package.

"The proposed constitutional changes embodied in the legal draft fall far short of accommodating the aspirations of our people within the framework of a united Sri Lanka," the four parties said in a joint statement.

They said they would still

"prefer to approach the political package proposed by the government, in a positive manner".

The parties are Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation, Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Organisation, People's Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam and Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students.

The government presented its long-awaited peace package in legal form Tuesday, labelling it a viable plan to end the island's 12-year ethnic war which has cost 50,000 lives.

The package is to be part of a new constitution which will also see the abolition of the executive presidency, electoral reforms and guarantees of fundamental rights.

It proposes changing Sri Lanka from a "unitary state" to a "union of regions" offering wide powers to Tamils, who make up 17 per cent of this tropical island's population.

The four parties criticised the proposals' failure to address the question of merging the northern and eastern provinces into one unit, which they said was a key to solving the conflict.

They said the proposals vested too much power in the centre while the regions "remained deprived of the subjects essential to ensure

a meaningful devolution of powers".

They criticised a proposal to seek state protection for Buddhism. Most Sinhalese, who make up 75 per cent of the population, are Buddhist and most Tamils are Hindu.

All four parties used to support the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) armed struggle for a Tamil homeland in the north and east, but later embraced the political process. Only one, People's Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam, is represented in Sri Lanka's 225-seat parliament with three seats.

The Tamil United Liberation Front and Eelam People's Democratic Front, which hold five and nine seats in parliament respectively, have yet to give their views on the package. The LTTE have shunned all invitations to view it.

The package goes to a parliamentary select committee next month and then to parliament, where a two-thirds majority is needed for approval. A national referendum is also to be held.

Sri Lanka's main opposition United National Party, which has 85 parliamentary seats and holds the key to the package passing through parliament, has remained silent on its views.

Indonesian ferry sinks in high seas; 54 killed

JAKARTA (R) — Fifty-four people were killed and more than 100 others were missing Saturday after a passenger ferry sank in high seas off Indonesia's westernmost province of Aceh, officials said.

A local Transport Ministry official told Reuters two Britons and one American woman were among the 39 people who survived the Friday night disaster when the ferry, which carried more than 200 people, sank after crashing into rocks.

Nine foreigners were on board the ferry, he said.

"The report we have says 39 people survived, 54 have been confirmed dead and the others are still missing," he said by telephone from Banda Aceh, capital of Aceh, 1,800 kilometres northwest of Jakarta.

The official identified the Britons as Stephen and Caroline and the American woman as Margaret. He gave no other details but said the search was still underway.

The ferry, named Gurita or Octopus, sank after hitting rocks.

It had left Banda Aceh for Sabang, 29 kilometres to its northwest at 7 p.m. (1200 GMT) Friday.

Officials from the Transport Ministry earlier said that the official records said 198 passengers and 16 crew were on board.

"Among them were nine foreign passengers. We haven't got any details of their nationalities," said one official.

The official Antara News Agency said 182 people were missing. It put the number of people on board at 226, including 16 crew members and said the Japanese-built ferry had the capacity to carry 500 passengers.

A navy officer contacted by Reuters in Banda Aceh said Saturday there were strong winds and high waves when the ship had struck rocks.

"The weather is still bad now, making it difficult for the rescuers to search for the missing people," he said.

Greek government to be sworn Monday

ATHENS (R) — New Greek Socialist Prime Minister Costas Simitis will swear in his government Monday after a series of weekend meetings to decide on the cabinet.

Major ministries were expected to change hands and big changes were also on the way on the boards of state companies and banks.

Old Socialist Party faithfuls, many of whom owe their jobs to political favours, will be sidelined in favour of professional technocrats, government sources said.

"The reform will go deep," a Simitis associate, who asked not to be named, told Reuters. "There will be a fresh start with different people with a different way of thinking."

At least seven ministers, confidants of former Premier Andreas Papandreu, looked set to be replaced and their successors will be faced by a number of long-pending issues like privatisations.

Mr. Simitis, 59, received a mandate Friday to form a government after the Socialist Party parliamentary group elected him Thursday to replace Mr. Papandreu, who resigned in poor health this week.

"We will be only judged by our deeds and the time until the next elections (October 1997) is short," Mr. Simitis' associate said.

"We must persuade our voters that we can do the job without Andreas Papandreu and do it in a better way."

The most striking change was likely to be at the Foreign Ministry where Mr. Papandreu's personal friend Karolos Papoulias looked set to pass the portfolio to his long-standing rival Theodoros Pangalos, the outspoken former European affairs minister.

Other ministers expected to be replaced include the ministers of state Antonis Livanis, of merchant marine George Katsifaras, of public order Sifis Valyrakis,

Press Minister Telemachos Hytiris and Justice Minister Yannis Pottakis.

Mr. Simitis was likely to keep National Economy Minister Yannis Papandoniou and Finance Minister Alexandros Papadopoulos, both committed to economic convergence with the European Union (EU) and credited with cutting inflation to single digits for the first time since 1973.

He is also expected to find a cabinet post for former European Commissioner Vasso Papandreu and Socialist Euro-Deputy Paraskevas Averginos.

Mr. Simitis is an advocate of more development funds, more privatisation, a realistic foreign policy in the Balkans and greater compliance with European Union standards.

He enjoys the confidence of the markets and is expected to push forward the long overdue partial privatisation of the state telecommunications company OTE and the Public Petroleum Corporation (DEP).

The Athens Stock Market welcomed Mr. Simitis with a 3.73 per cent jump to close at 983.47 points, up 35.5 points. Market analysts said he represented political renewal and was likely to be more effective at absorbing EU funds.

Best remembered for his 1985-87 term as economy minister, when he tried to put a lid on Mr. Papandreu's free-spending welfare policies, the German-educated lawyer and economist was the only candidate for the premiership who did not offer blind allegiance to Mr. Papandreu's policies.

His cry for reform touched Socialist deputies worried about the 1997 elections. His main rivals in the succession race, Interior Minister Akis Tsohatzopoulos and Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis, appeared too close to Mr. Papandreu.

Italy moves closer to ending crisis

ROME (R) — Italy's political crisis moved closer to resolution as President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro called a second quick round of meetings with party leaders to hear what they would prefer to see at the head of the next government.

Mr. Scalfaro was scheduled to hold 17 separate meetings, from 9 a.m. (0800 GMT) until 5.30 p.m. (1630 GMT) Saturday, as optimism grew among political leaders that a deal on forming Italy's 55th government since World War II could be in reach.

Technocrat Prime Minister Lamberto Dini, who resigned last week, has been widely tipped to be asked by Mr. Scalfaro to form a new government when the talks end. Mr. Scalfaro has already spent all week in talks with institutional figures and party leaders.

Key players on both sides of the bitterly divided parliament said Friday they agreed on the need for a government with cross-party support to work on the constitutional and electoral reforms Italy badly needs for greater political stability.

But dispute over the style of reform threatened to split the centre-right Freedom Alliance of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi.

"I believe it is possible to reach an agreement on reforms and I'm working towards that goal," said Mr. Berlusconi, who has said he would now be willing to give up his drive for a snap general election in the interests of Italy.

However key ally Gianfranco Fini, whose far-right National Alliance (AN) is the third-biggest party in parliament, appeared

cooler, insisting after meetings with junior partners on the need for "discontinuity with the outgoing government".

Asked by reporters whether the Freedom Alliance was united, Mr. Fini said simply: "We'll see."

But junior partners in the centre-right coalition suggested Mr. Fini was not vetoing Mr. Dini as prime minister-designate.

"Fini is concerned with the merit of the problems, not names," Pierferdinando Casini, leader of the small centrist CCD party, told reporters after a meeting with Mr. Fini.

An opinion poll Friday suggested Mr. Dini would be popular if he were asked back to head the next government. A quarter of respondents said he was the best prime minister Italy had had for years and 45 per cent said he had been good for the country.

If agreement can be reached, the next government will have the giant task of overseeing a cross-party drive to rewrite Italy's outmoded 1948 constitution.

Thorny questions include single or dual-round voting systems and whether Italy should pick its prime minister with a French-style system in which an elected president appoints the prime minister directly. Under the current system, the president picks a premier, who then has to be ratified by parliament.

Massimo D'Alema, leader of the ex-communist Democratic Party of the Left, said agreement was possible and if reforms could be achieved, Italy could hold an election under new rules in 1997.

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Hamas buries 2 slain members

(Continued from page 1)

are implicated in the shoot-

The ramifications of the killing prove a part of the (Palestinian) struggle in an extermination operation," said the Amman-based Hamas spokesman, Rahim Ghosbeh.

Although he did not direct blame the PNA for the killing, he said: "The operation was carried out in the if-rule area and the author should explain how it happened."

He spoke of growing tension in Jenin, which was cornered in the wake of the incident.

Mr. Ghosbeh told AFP at the soldiers' shot at the hide of the three Hamas militants from a far distance, more than 500 metres, and is shows that the Israelis are tipped off on the colour of the car from inside Jenin.

He drew a parallel between today's killing and the assassination on Jan. 5 of the movement's master bomber, Yehya Ayyash, who is killed when a mobile phone blew up in his face the autonomous Gaza Strip.

Mr. Ghosbeh categorically refused remarks made by a senior Palestinian leader, Ahmad Abbas, who said at Ayyash was ready to nounce armed struggle and he himself up in the PNA.

"These remarks are unwise. Hamas is carrying out internal investigations and they will take some time before they shed light on an assassination," he added. A spokesman for the PLO Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) defied movement's Damascus-based leadership and voted in Palestinian general elections.

"My participation in the election proves that my membership in Palestine is stronger than my membership in the Popular Front," Riyadh Malki told journalists after voting in Ramallah.

The PFLP, led by George Habbash, is vehemently opposed to the limited self-rule agreements which led to Saturday's elections.

A senior PFLP official said Mr. Malki had effectively removed himself from the movement by choosing to take part in the elections.

"All those who participate in the vote disobey the decisions of the central committee and are considered outside the front," said Abdul Latif Gheith.

PFLP sources said the party's Ramallah spokesman, Ahmad Saadat, Wednesday night and detained two young militants in a pre-dawn raid Saturday.

There have also been reports of PFLP activists being arrested in other Palestinian towns for the handing out leaflets calling for a boycott of the elections.

Earlier, Abla Saadat, wife of the detained PFLP spokesman, said she had been told by Palestinian officials that her husband was being held on direct orders from PNA leader Yasser Arafat and would not be released until after Saturday's election.

He was detained Wednesday, she said. Palestinian police also arrested four PFLP militants early this week near Bethlehem in connection with the wounding of an Israeli civilian by gunfire. Israeli officials also blamed the PFLP for the shooting deaths of two Israeli soldiers Tuesday night near Hebron.

By Alain Epp Weaver

THE WESTERN edge of Khan Yunis refugee camp affords the first-time visitor a spectacular view of the Mediterranean Sea. No more than 2 kilometres away from the camp the sea rolls in to meet a verdant strip of land called Al Mawasi. The term mawasi, a local farmer informs me, designates low-lying coastal lands where sweet groundwater lies only one or two metres below the surface; the Gaza Strip mawasi runs from Khan Yunis down to Rafah. The mawasi also happens to lie in what the Cairo agreement, signed by Israel and the PLO in May, 1994, calls a "yellow area," that is an area still under Israeli military rule. Its Palestinian residents are fenced in by the sea to the west and the Gush Qatif settlement bloc in all other directions.

Approximately 5,000 people from around 25 families live in Al Mawasi, spread out along the length of the coast, concentrated in extended family group-

ings. While many houses are without electricity, and the area has no social services, forcing locals to trek to Khan Yunis or Rafah for education or health care, Al Mawasi's farms are second to none in the Gaza Strip.

The political situation under which Al Mawasi's inhabitants live, however, is in stark contrast to its idyllic greenery. Israeli military occupation is a continuing fact of life, the "autonomy" enjoyed by other Gazans a distant reality. As one of the "yellow areas" delineated by the Cairo agreement, Al Mawasi falls under two authorities: Israel retains control of security, while Palestinians are in charge of civilian affairs.

The agreements define Israel's security authority in the "yellow areas" as overriding, with the result that things are not much different than they were in the "old days" of occupation: Israel maintains a tight control over land, housing and water. Farmers, for exam-

Letter from Al Mawasi

ple, point out a new road built on confiscated land leading from a settlement straight to the sea. Two months ago the Israeli military declared a curfew here and stationed 10 soldiers on top of each of the houses adjoining the planned road and stayed there until its completion.

Although the Cairo agreement gives Palestinians the theoretical right to build structures in the "yellow areas," in practice no new houses are built and many structures remain uncompleted, because Israeli soldiers turn back any truck with building supplies at the entrance to Al Mawasi. And any new structures are subject to demolition. Last year the Israelis demolished several cement "cabins" built for Palestinians taking holidays by the sea, claiming that they were unlicensed.

New wells are also forbidden, although a friend points out to me a recently dug well; "the farmers know new wells aren't

allowed," he explains, "but some of them have no choice if they want to keep their farms running." Meanwhile, the Gush Qatif settlements continue to draw water from wells at rates far outstripping Palestinian use.

The Palestinian authority keeps a low profile in Al Mawasi. Cars sport Palestinian license plates, but residents are still waiting for Palestinian ID cards to replace their old Israeli ones. Uniformed Palestinian policemen and official representatives of the Palestine National Authority wishing to enter Al Mawasi must coordinate their entrance with the Israelis; such visits are rare. The Cairo agreement allows the Palestinians to exercise civil authority over 5 kilometres of beach next to Al Mawasi not officially in the "yellow area." This involves supervision of the Khan Yunis and Rafah fishermen's wharves, recreational activities along the beach, and other civilian affairs, such as taxes

and permits, related to the beach.

While other Gazans are allowed access to Al Mawasi, they must pass unarmed through an Israeli checkpoint on the western edge of Khan Yunis or Rafah. Once in Al Mawasi, Palestinians may only drive along the access roads to the beach and the coastal road, just recently reopened to Palestinians cars; those who inadvertently stray onto the settler road a kilometre in from the sea must pay a fine and are barred from Al Mawasi for 40 days.

Few Palestinian political leaders make public statements any more about the settlements in the Gaza Strip, perhaps hesitant to draw attention to the possibility that the deferral of the issue of settlements to the final status talks has in fact solidified their presence into permanence. At least this much is sure: until the final status talks have produced an agreement on the settlements, such oddi-

ties as settler hotels and restaurants along Al Mawasi's beach will continue operation.

Although not optimistic about the future, the Al Mawasi farmers show a strong resolve to remain steadfast on their land. Mustafa, a fruit farmer with many dunums of guava trees, has a small orange grove to the east of the settler road — all the adjoining land has been taken over by the settlements. "The settlers tell me to name my price and they'll buy the land from me," he says. "When they saw I wouldn't sell, they made problems for me when I went to tend my trees. I go over there now only when I have to, because when I go, there are fights." Whether Mustafa's individual resolve will be matched with a collective Palestinian resolve against the settlements which still occupy nearly 40 per cent of the Strip and for the rights of Al Mawasi's residents, remains to be seen.

Middle East International

Victor Bisharat: 'Love is giving'

IN 1977 His Majesty King Hussein granted Victor Bisharat with the Jordanian Medal of Honour for having donated his design for Jordan's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which still stands outlined on a hillside in Amman surrounded by trees and visited by many local and foreign dignitaries who water the symbolic olive tree in its grounds after following its tour of those who die for their country.

At the time of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, on one of his many visits home to family and friends, Victor delivered the following poem to the people of Jordan:

"Excite all what you see of body and soul,
The secret of eternal life

is giving,
If the body should perish one day,
The soul would then vex death.

In that the soul still lives,
In the hearts of our friends,
And the fire that burns in their hearts,
Lights up the crimson skies.

Always reminding those who live,
That love is giving.
Victor Hanna Bisharat who shaped the skyline of Stamford, Connecticut and helped in the urban renewal of that city, died in his sleep at his home in Sacramento, California, on January 10.

Victor was born Salt, in June of 1920, to Sheikh Hanna Bisharat, one of the first of the Bisharat family to leave Amman for the

West Bank, in an entrepreneurial spirit. The Bisharat's themselves were and remain a great landowning family in the most complete traditional sense of the word, with the love of the land and the people on it that marked and should mark the strength of Arab landowning society and urban renewal.

In his way, Victor carried the great Bisharat spirit to the United States, where he emigrated in 1947 having been one of that great generation that graduated from the American University of Beirut in its heyday. Once rooming with the late Wafiq El Tel, Victor graduated with a degree in architecture in 1940. He continued graduate studies at the University of California under the tutelage of

architect Eric Mendelsohn. His U.S. career began as a team member on the layout of the site plan for Disneyland in California; in the 50s he became the chief architect for the Ralph Parsons Company, where he distinguished himself in designing a house for industrialist, Daniel C. Ludwig, the 300 foot yacht for Mr. Parsons himself and several commercial buildings for the firm including the Beirut headquarters of International Bank.

Victor Bisharat opened his own firm in 1960, concentrating on commercial work. By 1964 he was competing for and won the design for the Jordan Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair in New York, receiving a commendation from the fair's organisers as the most im-

aginative design at the fair. Throughout the 60s and 70s he concentrated his efforts on developing the master-plan of the city of Stamford, Connecticut, in conjunction with the F. D. Rich Co. He also designed other buildings in Bridgeport and New York. In the early 1980s he worked on numerous other projects in both the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates where he designed several palaces for the ruling family, including that of Sheikh Surroor Bin Nahayan of Abu Dhabi.

Victor Bisharat's architectural approach was highly individualistic and sculptural, believing in individual solutions in harmony with total concepts. He once said that he thought of architecture as "a vehicle of expression to manifest the

splendour of the human spirit and attest to the nobility of man's purpose." He believed that form did not follow function, but "transcends it." For him, design was to satisfy functional requirements and "create an organic totality that fulfills it. One cannot create this totality by assembling parts, and the parts of a totality cannot exist without reflecting the quality of the whole..."

In that perfectionist spirit, Victor helped make little changes in the skyline and the totality of the whole in the U.S., San Juan, Puerto Rico, Beirut, Amman and the UAE. If "love is giving," there should surely be a little bit of sky that belongs to him in heaven.

Mamadouh Bisharat

Iraq awaits oil sale talks

(Continued from page 1)

300 from 1,700 dinars. Hardest hit were small retailers, car owners and kiosk owners.

"I am going bust. It is over. (rice) lost about 350 dinars three hours," said one young man pushing his empty cart in Jamila which bustled with shoppers on Saturday.

It was a different story for the women shoppers.

"I wish to God it is serious this time. What has our oil done? Why do not they let it go out and send us food — those wretched and merciless Americans," said one woman.

Egypt brotherhood leader dies

(Continued from page 12)

Mr. Mashour walked in front of the coffin with three other Brotherhood members and shook hands with numerous followers.

No government representative attended the ceremony. But the Liberal and Labour parties, both allied to the Brotherhood, and the liberal Wafd party sent delegations.

"We certainly would have

had a larger turnout if not for (government) repression which intimidated people," one of the organisers told AFP.

Ahu Al Nasr, who became the Brotherhood's "supreme guide" in 1986, was the group's fourth leader since its founding in 1928, following the founder Hassan Al Banna, killed in 1949. Hassan Al Hodeibi and Omar Tilmisani,

"The Pope's position is extremely clear. He has condemned nuclear testing and asked all countries to sign the universal nuclear test ban treaty," Green Party leader Carlo Ripa di Meana told Reuters. "Chirac is in flagrant contradiction of this."

The Vatican spokesman said last week's speech was not aimed specifically at France but referred to nuclear tests in general.

Paris has carried out five tests and plans at least one more before concluding the programme by the end of February. It has said it will

then sign a treaty banning nuclear tests for good.

Mr. Chirac told the Pope that France favoured "the causes of disarmament and development."

In his speech to Mr. Chirac, the Pope said political acts should be linked to a "constant moral reflection."

After their meeting, Mr. Chirac said he vowed that France would be faithful to its Catholic heritage and spiritual vocation.

"France, on which so many men and women are counting on in the world, wants to be faithful to its heritage, its

spiritual and human calling."

"France is in Bosnia. It is in Cambodia. It is in the Middle East and on the shores of the Mediterranean cherished by the people of the Bible," he said.

Mr. Chirac added that France is also "determined to help Africa to take on peace" and that in Europe, his nation "acts relentlessly for the union of our old continent reconciled at last."

The Pope urged Mr. Chirac to heal "the harmful fractures in the social fabric" and uphold the family and Catholic education in France.

Gamaa threatens U.S. over Abdul Rahman

(Continued from page 12)

The United States had to realise though "it is incapable of confronting millions of Muslims across the world. It is time it understands that even if Arab and Muslim governments are falling at their feet, that does not mean they can stifle the Muslim people," the statement added.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno hailed the sentences saying: "Justice has been done. These are tough sentences for heinous crimes. We will continue to fight terrorism and seek justice with every tool at our disposal."

Sheikh Abdul Rahman and his co-defendants were not charged with the World Trade Centre bombing which left six dead and 1,000 wounded, but officials suspected they had links to it.

Two Iranian newspapers also blasted the United States on Saturday for jailing Sheikh Abdul Rahman.

Jamhuri Islami said the sheikh's "path will continue despite the artificial verdict" issued against him.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman is a "victim of Zionist hatred and rancour against Muslims," charged the daily, which is close to Islamic hardliners. The sentence "was prepared

in advance."

Salam, which represents Islamic left-wingers, said the verdict "was to please the Zionist regime and Mubarak."

In an editorial headlined "The American Justice," the paper compared accusations levelled against the sheikh — that he sought to topple the U.S. government — to a covert action plan adopted by Washington against Iran.

"Why are alleged efforts to topple the U.S. government a crime, but not those to overthrow Iran?" Salam asked.

The plan, aimed at moderating Iran's Islamic regime, was a modified version of a proposal by U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich to overthrow the Iranian government.

Palestinians vote

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian legislature and for president — into separate boxes. He was certain to beat his little-known woman challenger Samiha Khalil to become the Palestinians' first popularly elected leader.

One Jerusalem voter, Iyub Julian, 50 said: "I hope here will be changes but if he elects him do not take place in the right conditions, they will have no sense."

Six Palestinians working for non-governmental organisations were also prevented from entering the main East Jerusalem post office despite having valid papers.

"This is not right," complained French Deputy Daniel Garrigue, one of the foreign observers led by a team from the European Union. "The Israelis are preventing voters from coming to the polling stations."

"There is a difference between ensuring security and putting pressure" on people, added Belgian Deputy Raymond Dury.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said he was satisfied with the running of the poll.

In Hebron, a Palestinian stabbed and slightly wounded an Israeli settler girl.

Jewish settlers, who live in the heart of Hebron, reacted by beating six Palestinians and smashing the windows of an Arab car, Palestinian sources said.

Soldiers detained the attacker, who Israeli security sources said belonged to the

militant group Hamas which is boycotting the elections.

The town, a flashpoint between Arab and Jew, had been tense all day.

Throughout the violence, four Japanese Buddhist priests in traditional robes sat passively on the grass near the Ibrahim mosque beating drums and chanting. They raised a banner reading "Prayers for peace."

Angry settlers taunted reinforced contingents of Israeli soldiers and police who spent much of the day scrambling to separate groups of Jews chasing Arabs.

Hundreds of settlers strolled through the streets on the Jewish Sabbath, walking to and from the Ibrahim Mosque.

Voting proceeded without interruption during the clashes. The Palestinian polling station was situated just off a road leading to a Jewish enclave in the town. Opposite the station was an Islamic court building covered in Hebrew graffiti.

"Death to the Arabs," one of the slogans read.

While election officials reported irregularities in the elections, they would not affect the outcome of the historic polls.

Officials notably complained that overflowing ballot boxes in the Gaza Strip were emptied into plastic bags during the vote without proper supervision.

"The number of ballot boxes in Gaza was insuffi-

cient," said Tawfiq Abu Ghazala, vice-president of the election commission, explaining that the boxes had to be emptied so other electors could vote.

An Irish observer said the ballot boxes filled up because organisers "didn't realise how big the ballot paper was... The boxes are very big but unfortunately there was not enough room."

But he added: "I think the elections are fair."

There were also reports of candidates and even policemen campaigning in and around polling stations in violation of election rules.

"Some people tried to influence voters even inside the polling stations, while policemen just looked on," complained Jamal Zakut, an observer in Gaza City for the small Fida party led by Yasser Abed Rabbo.

"Worse, in other stations policemen even pressured voters," he added.

In Ramallah, policemen deployed in one polling station in a primary school spent their time distributing campaign leaflets for one of the candidates.

And in another station, illiterate voters were scouted out by campaign workers offering to vote in their place.

But Mr. Zakut said the irregularities "would not have a significant influence on voters' choices."

Mustapha Barghouti, a candidate for the Palestinian People's Party in Ramallah, also said the vote "generally took place in a democratic manner."

Hamas dismissed the elections, saying its ideas would

survive even if many Islamists took part in the voting.

On the defensive against reports of the high turnout in the poll, spokesman Mahmoud Al Zahar said Hamas would not be pushed to the margins of Palestinian politics.

Candidates in the elections say they believed Hamas blundered when it decided not to put up candidates and would live to regret the decision.

Many Islamists did take part in the voting, saying they wanted to express their opposition to the self-rule agreements which the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has signed with Israel.

But Dr. Zahar told Reuters Hamas would have lost credibility by taking part, because of its opposition in principle to the self-rule deals which made elections possible.

"Hamas is not being marginalised by the elections. Even if Hamas was completely uprooted, its programme would survive through all the Islamic organisations in the Arab and Islamic world," he said.

He denied that Hamas had approved or given instructions to any of the candidates in the elections. He specifically denied Hamas had anything to do with a list of "approved" Islamist candidates circulated in Gaza on Friday.

"This is not true. The aim of these reports is to prove that what Hamas says in public what it does not do in secret. It's designed to tarnish Hamas's reputation," he added.

The list included seven

Hamas militants running for seats in the self-rule council as "Islamic independents" and two official candidates from Mr. Arafat's Fateh movement, Riyad Zaanan and Fakhri Shekura.

About 40 people, including women wearing black veils over their faces, were seen carrying the lists into nine Gaza City polling stations.

Israeli leaders hailed the smooth running of the elections and dismissed criticism of voting in annexed East Jerusalem.

"I am satisfied," Prime Minister Peres said, according to a spokesman from his office.

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shabai pointed to "excellent cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli police" during the vote. "I am happy with the smooth running of the elections," he said.

He rejected criticism from international observers that the heavy presence of Israeli police and border guards around polling stations in East Jerusalem had intimidated Palestinian voters.

"These police were essential to ensure the security of voters. They didn't go inside the post offices which were transformed into polling stations," the minister said.

Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid wished Mr. Arafat "good luck" in a telegram extending his wishes to "all Palestinian supporters of peace."

"It will be possible to cut a year off the negotiations on the final status of the territories," he told state radio. Talks on the final status of

the territories are due to start in May and last three years.

In other election-related developments:

The head of the Palestinian preventive security service, Colonel Jibril Rajub, was intercepted by Israeli police in East Jerusalem and ordered back to Palestinian territory.

Col. Rajub was detained at an Israeli checkpoint near the Old City's Damascus Gate as he tried to visit one of five post offices set aside in East Jerusalem for the elections.

"Colonel Rajub planned to enter one of the polling stations, which is prohibited," said spokesman Shmuel Ben Rubi.

He said Col. Rajub was taken to the office of Jerusalem police chief Arie Amit, who ordered him to return to the autonomous Palestinian territories, he said.

Mr. Arafat's sole challenger for president of the self-rule government, Samiba Khalil, went to the polls but forgot to mark her choice on the ballot.

"What do you expect, it's the first time in my life that I vote," the 72-year-old grandmother and community activist told reporters.

Officials at the voting bureau in Al Birh, outside Ramallah, allowed Ms. Khalil to reopen the envelope and mark the box for either herself or Mr. Arafat after she realised that she had forgotten to put her choice.

Ms. Khalil said she did not receive fair coverage from official Palestinian television and radio during the campaign.

"The Palestinian media

have ignored me, but I have the support of my people," she said.

Iran said the elections were a ploy to regain Mr. Arafat's legitimacy he lost to his people when he entered peace negotiations with Israel.

Tehran Radio said the polls would "be under Israeli dominance under the present conditions."

"Arafat hopes to recover the legitimacy he lost among Palestinians after he capitulated to the Zionist regime," the radio said in Iran's first official reaction to the vote.

It warned, however, that the "non-participation of the opposition will stop efforts by the leader of the Palestinian (National) Authority to pose himself as a representative of the Palestinians."

It ended with a friendly handshake but there was a touch of frost in Jimmy Carter's brief encounter with an Israeli policeman outside a Palestinian polling station in East Jerusalem.

"Are the police photographing the voters?" the former U.S. president, wearing the blue vest of an international observer of elections, asked a policeman on duty outside an Israeli post office where Palestinians cast their ballots.

"Yes," the policeman replied.

"Why?" Mr. Carter injected.

"Yes, to prevent a problem. But not the voters inside — outside," the policeman said.

"But you're taking a photograph of everyone that votes," Mr. Carter insisted.

"No." Really no. Only if we have problems. We only photograph. No problems — no photo," the officer said.

"If a Palestinian comes here to vote, are you taking his photograph," Mr. Carter asked.

The policeman was adamant: "No, only if we have a problem we are taking it. Without a problem — no picture."

"OK," Mr. Carter said. "We don't want you to photograph them because that intimidates people."

"Don't worry," was the reply.

"But I'm worried," Mr. Carter said with a smile. Then they shook hands.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon staged partially successful strikes to protest against the elections.

Most of the estimated 400,000 Palestinian refugees living in a dozen squalid camps in Lebanon oppose the PLO-Israeli peace arrangements because they offer them little chance of ever returning to their homeland.

Schools and about half the shops and businesses closed in Ain Al Hilweh, the biggest camp housing 75,000 refugees near the southern port city of Sidon, but there was none of the tyre-burning and banners normally seen in protest strikes.

Witnesses said life appeared normal in some of the other camps, but schools and nearly half the shops closed at Rashidiyeh camp near the southern port of Tyre and in Jall camp at Baalbek, in the eastern Bekaa Valley.

Al Dustour publisher raises capital to fund expansion

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Press and Publications Company Limited, which publishes the Al Dustour Arabic-language daily, is raising its capital by JD 500,000 to JD 2 million to finance expansion projects, the company announced Saturday.

The expansion projects reflect the constant efforts by Jordanian newspaper industry to acquire advanced equipment and keep abreast with the progress in printing technology.

The Jordan Press Foundation Company Limited, which publishes the King-

dom's mass-circulation daily Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times, went through an expansion project in 1994.

After raising capital to JD 2 million in premium for the fresh issue, the company acquired a sophisticated printing press and built new buildings. The entire process of publishing a newspaper there is fully computerized.

In an advertisement in Al Dustour Saturday, the Jordan Press and Publications Company Limited invited its shareholders to subscribe to 250,000 of the new shares and placed the remainder of the new stock for public subscription at JD 6 each — JD 1 book value with a premium

of JD 5.

The company secured approval from the Ministry of Trade and Industry for the marketing price of shares with the JD 5 premium last week.

Under the companies law, public shareholding companies are required to obtain approval from the ministry for fresh issues as well as the sale price. Saturday's advertisement of the fresh issue is also a legal requirement.

The Jordan Press and Publications Company Limited intends to use the proceeds of the fresh issue to finance expansion projects including the purchase of advanced machinery and equipment for its printing press and studios,

an electronic archives and a new warehouse.

The new machinery and equipment would include a post press system, delivery belts, inserters, stackers, strappers and rappers etc.

The electronic archives, which will complement the present system of keeping the physical copies of daily issues as well as offer an advanced network of information retrieval, is estimated to cost JD 120,000.

The Jordan Press and Publications Company Limited, like the Jordan Press Foundation Company Limited, also runs a commercial printing

company. The government, acting through its investment agencies including the SSC, acquired full equity in all newspaper establishments in 1988/89 but returned part of the capital to private ownership in 1990.

Al Dustour ranks as the second largest-circulation Arabic-language daily in Jordan after Al Ra'i. The Kingdom's third Arabic-language daily is Al Aswaq, which bought the assets of Sawt Al Shaab, an almost fully government-owned daily which folded last year after incurring heavy losses.

The company was established as a private partnership in 1967. In 1986, the company, like all other Jordanian newspaper publishing firms, was converted into a public shareholding

Egypt embracing build-operate-transfer concept

CAIRO (R) — The Cairo government, encouraged by U.S. and Egyptian businessmen, has taken the first steps towards letting the private sector take on infrastructure projects such as power stations and toll roads.

Taber Helmi, spokesman for a council of businessmen from the two countries, has said the government was about to choose consultants to set the rules for Egypt's first projects under the build-operate-transfer (BOT) system.

Under the system, a company undertakes to build a project, run it for a limited period and collect revenue from it before handing it over to the government.

The first three projects on the drawing board in Egypt are the all in the power sector — two 325 MW gas-fired power plants and a pumped storage system at Mount Ataq near Suez — and they will probably be worth about \$1.5 billion in total, Mr. Helmi said.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore have discussed when they met the businessmen in their role as joint chairman of the council, known as the Presidents' Council, he added.

The council is one of the main institutions of the fledgling "Partnership for Growth" which the United States is promoting as a com-

plement to traditional aid to Egypt.

The council has a mandate to come up with opportunities for Egyptian-American joint ventures in the private sector and the BOT projects are the first fruits of their labour.

Mr. Helmi, a partner in a Cairo law firm, told Reuters that in a second phase the government would let private sector companies build power plants generating 2,500 MW and costing about \$2 billion. The timescale for completion of the first two phase in seven to eight years.

"Power companies are all interested. The reaction we have had to this is extremely favourable and we expect a large number of multinational firms to explore these opportunities," he added.

"We also have the green light to start looking at the idea of toll roads under a BOT system," he said.

The 15 U.S. businessmen on the council include the chief executive of Black and Veatch, a vice president of General Electric Company and representatives of the big oil companies Amoco Corporation and Mobil Oil Corporation.

The council has compiled a report detailing the obstacles to investment in Egypt and recommending other steps along the path of economic liberalisation.

A U.S. Embassy official told Reuters it would include points like streamlining approvals, judicial reform and transparency in the Egyptian government's tendering procedures.

Businessmen on both sides were seeking trade liberalisation, with the Egyptians especially interested in opening up the U.S. market to Egypt's exports of textiles and food, he added.

Mr. Helmi, who is a member of the council, played down the gravity of bureaucratic disincentives to investing in Egypt.

"The U.S. side brought many obstacles to our attention but the government has taken care of 50 per cent in the past year. The perceptions were not correct. We have been trying to correct those perceptions and put out the right information," he said.

The council, Mr. Helmi added, is pressing an amendment to the banking law to allow foreign banks to hold a majority stake in joint-venture banks in Egypt. "You'll see developments on this within the next months or so," he said.

It is also promoting an export processing zone in the north of the Gulf of Suez and a fiscal system which might exempt factories from all forms of taxation in proportion to the amount of their output which they export.

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Labour Ministry to intensify inspection of non-Jordanian workers

☆☆ ACCORDING to informed sources, the Ministry of Labour has decided to intensify efforts to regulate the situation of foreign labour in the Kingdom after discovering many non-Jordanians working without permits or being employed in unauthorised jobs. The minister has requested the heads of concerned directorates to intensify the inspection of private and public institutions and to order any worker to leave the Kingdom if found in violation of labour regulations.

The sources said that despite repeated statements, the ministry did not succeed in regulating the situation of about 188,000 non-Jordanian workers out of a total of 288,000 foreign labourers staying in the country. The minister recently indicated that during the three-month grace period given to non-Jordanian workers last summer to sort out their status in the Kingdom, the ministry regulated the stay for about 100,000 persons only. A memorandum prepared by the ministry showed that of 86,340 work permits given to Arab nationals last year 81,843 permits were for Egyptian workers. Housemaids who had work permits totalled 6,273 of whom 1,517 were Arab nationals and 4,756 were non-Arabs. According to the memorandum, foreign workers were employed in three main areas: 35.3 per cent in construction, loading and unloading and other unskilled jobs as well as some professions such as carpentry, blacksmithing, sewing and shoemaking. Agricultural labourers accounted for 34.3 per cent of the permits and the remaining 27.8 per cent were for housemaids and other workers in hotels, restaurants and cafes (Al Aswaq)

Loans extended to municipalities, village councils reach JD 5m in 1995

☆☆ LOANS EXTENDED by the Cities and Villages Development Bank in 1995 to various municipalities and village councils amounted to JD 5 million, and, according to the minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment, the bank is expected to boost its lending to JD 7 million this year. He said the loans could finance productive projects that would generate fixed income to the municipalities in line with the objectives of the bank that aim at helping the municipalities achieve self-financing. The minister has submitted a recommendation to the Council of Ministers to increase the bank's capital from JD 12 to JD 25 million. The bank's general manager, Zuhair Khalifeh, said the recommendation was based on the good financial situation of the bank and the accumulation of a high reserve that topped JD 17.7 million at the end of 1995. The bank financed 113 projects last year in addition to extending JD 500,000 in interest-free loans (Al Dustour + Al Ra'i).

Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan) boosts pretax profit to JD 2.45m

☆☆ THE ARAB Banking Corporation (Jordan) boosted profit before tax last year by six per cent to JD 2.45 million and the management is considering the distribution of a half share free to shareholders in the context of raising the bank's capital from JD 10 million to JD 20 million. Noting that there will not be cash dividends for 1995, the bank's general manager Jawad Hadid, said the bank will also float five million shares for private subscription towards raising the capital. Unveiling other financial results for 1995, he said that total assets had risen to JD 171 million and that shareholders' equity increased from JD 14 million in 1994 to JD 16 million last year. Mr. Hadid said operations at the new main branch and management building would start at the beginning of March 1996 (Al Aswaq).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CERTIFICATES - JORDANIAN				
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607170				
ORGANIZED MARKET HIANS PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 20/01/1996				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CHANGES
ARAB BANK PSC	1180	277190	231.000	235.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1107	4518	4.350	4.370
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1250	1593	1.270	1.270
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	6000	15862	2.620	2.640
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK/NEW	2074	6459	3.130	3.130
JORDAN GULF BANK	108414	112790	1.040	1.060
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	250	950	3.800	3.800
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1400	5110	3.610	3.650
BUSINESS BANK	250	796	3.190	3.190
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1600	5295	3.310	3.330
WEST ZARAH SAVILAND/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1000	3100	3.100	3.100
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	29250	25708	0.880	0.880
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	23100	32424	1.370	1.420
BANKS SECTOR	177995	492166	INDEX NUMBER: 184.36	CHANGE: +1.402
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	7064	18073	2.500	2.700
INSURANCE SECTOR	7064	18073	INDEX NUMBER: 129.24	CHANGE: +0.007
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	22100	37726	1.670	1.720
LEIST DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	15120	15061	1.260	1.260
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	768	1512	1.960	1.960
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	600	1548	2.570	2.580
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	6000	11549	1.940	1.940
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1000	980	0.980	0.980
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMERCIAL HOTELS	2700	5823	2.130	2.180
ARAB TRAVEL FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	25250	7650	3.020	3.400
ARAB PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	2900	3039	1.050	1.050
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANISING LAND TRANS.	3230	7303	2.210	2.250
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	1000	980	0.980	0.980
SERVICES SECTOR	57988	91677	INDEX NUMBER: 137.11	CHANGE: +0.832
ATTANBOUR CORST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	500	600	1.200	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	11707	42348	3.600	3.620
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1200	3898	3.240	3.250
THE ZARAH POTASH	178	968	5.450	5.450
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	244	2601	9.820	9.860
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	200	728	3.650	3.640
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	7150	35862	5.000	5.000
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	725	4431	6.100	6.100
JORDAN DAILY	400	1020	2.550	2.550
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	450	1046	2.330	2.330
DATA RE. OMAN DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	228	2707	7.150	7.150
TYREWORK & POLYTEX	20500	11698	0.550	0.580
ARAB HAPPI COFFEEING & TRADING	4250	5993	1.390	1.410
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	446	446	1.000	1.000
INTERNATIONAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	600	871	1.420	1.460
JORDAN ROCKET INDUSTRIES	3000	3190	1.050	1.050
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	1500	1411	0.940	1.010
UNIVERSAL JORDAN INDUSTRIES	6300	20040	3.190	3.190
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	1800	3575	1.980	1.980
JORDAN SEA CABLE COMPANY	3400	4400	1.290	1.290
EL-KAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	7300	16427	2.240	2.240
INTERNATIONAL TOWARDS & CIGARETTES	19063	24924	1.360	1.360
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETARIAN OIL INDUSTRIES	1636	2574	1.540	1.560
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	49544	191554	INDEX NUMBER: 137.21	CHANGE: +1.052
GRAND TOTAL	335591	804470	INDEX NUMBER: 164.37	CHANGE: +3.321
NO. OF "PAPER" SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 182501				
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET: 104216				

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Financial Jordan Times			
Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close	New York Close	19/1/1996
Sterling Pound	1.5185	1.5185	1.5105
Deutsche Mark	1.4724	1.4724	1.4803
Swiss Franc	1.1885	1.1885	1.1925
French Franc	5.0215	5.0215	5.0535
Japanese Yen	105.49	105.33	105.33
European Currency Unit	1.2660	1.2660	1.2450**
* Unit per SDR, ** European Currency Unit - ECU			
Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 19/1/1996			
Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTH	6 MONTH
U.S. Dollar	5.21	5.18	5.12
Sterling Pound	6.25	6.18	6.12
Deutsche Mark	5.37	5.25	5.18
Swiss Franc	1.37	1.37	1.37
French Franc	4.06	4.06	4.06
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.25	0.25
European Currency Unit	5.61	5.75	5.62
Interest rate for bank deposits in U.S. Dollars, 100,000 or equivalent			
Precious Metals Date: 19/1/1996			
Metal	1 SOU/10	JD/Gm	USD/Gm
Gold	204.50	7.40	5.45
Silver			0.100
31 pure			
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 20/1/1996			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7032	0.7106	
Sterling Pound	1.0276	1.0729	
Deutsche Mark	0.4775	0.4799	
Swiss Franc	0.5926	0.5956	
French Franc	0.1400	0.1407	
Japanese Yen	0.6707	0.6741	
Dutch Guilder	0.4270	0.4291	
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000	
Italian Lira	0.0447	0.0449	
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000	
Per 100			
Other Currencies Date: 20/1/1996			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.5260	1.5760	
Lebanese Lira	0.044250	0.044650	
Saudi Riyal	0.1670	0.1696	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670	
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945	
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200	
Omani Riyal	1.6350	1.6410	
UAE Dirham	0.1929	0.1933	
Greek Drachma	0.2875	0.3150	
Cypriot Pound	1.4675	1.5540	
Per 100			

Jazz beat Orlando; Seattle lose in OT

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Karl "the mailman" Malone delivered 37 points and the NBA's premier passer, John Stockton, dished out 17 assists as the Utah Jazz halted a two-game slide with a 111-99 win over the Orlando Magic on Friday.

Malone, who was 15-of-24 from the field, added 11 rebounds and eight assists. Stockton scored 15 points and Jeff Hornacek added 23 for the Jazz, who improved to 13-4 at home.

Nick Anderson scored 29 points, including a 9-for-12 performance from three-point range, and Shaquille O'Neal and Penny Hardaway added 19 apiece for Orlando, which has been invincible at home but dropped to just 8-10 on the road.

After Brian Shaw opened the fourth quarter by converting a three-point play to give the Magic an 86-82 lead, Hornacek hit a 15-footer to spark a 16-3 run that left Utah with a 98-89 advantage with 5:15 left.

Dennis Scott scored 12 points, O'Neal had eight rebounds and Hardaway added nine assists for Orlando.

In Seattle, Patrick Ewing poured in 41 points, pulled down 16 rebounds and keyed an 8-0 run in overtime as the New York Knicks held off the Supersonics, 100-97.

John Starks scored 17 points and Derek Harper added 15 for New York, which improved to 11-6 on the road.

Shawn Kemp had 25 points and 14 rebounds and Gary Payton added 22 points for Seattle, which had its 10-game home winning streak snapped.

After Nate McMillan hit a three-pointer to give the Supersonics a 94-91 lead with 2:03 left in overtime, Ewing made a bucket to ignite the game-deciding burst.

At Indiana, Rick Smith scored 25 points and hit a tie-breaking bucket with 1:52 to play as the Pacers blew a 12-point fourth-quarter lead but recovered for an 89-81 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

Indiana won for the eighth time in 10 games and ran their home winning streak to 11 games.

"Down the stretch, we did come up with some big plays and that kept our home streak going," Smith said.

Reggie Miller added 22 points for Indiana, including five free throws in the final minute to preserve the victory. Allan Houston had 21 points and Grant Hill added 20 for the Pistons.

At Minnesota, Isaiah Rider scored 27 points and Christian Laettner scored six of his 11 in a key 17-7 third-quarter run as the Timberwolves ran their modest winning streak to three games with a 100-92 victory over the San Antonio Spurs.



Miami Heat centre Alonzo Mourning (right) dunks the ball over Charlotte Hornets centre George Zidek (left) during the first quarter of NBA play at Miami Arena (Reuters photo)

Darrick Martin had 14 points and a career-high 13 assists. Sam Mitchell scored 16 points and Tom Gugliotta had 14 points and 14 rebounds for Minnesota, which beat San Antonio for just the fourth time in 33 all-time meetings.

Brad Lohaus scored 22 points, David Robinson added 21 points and 15 rebounds to pace the Spurs.

In Dallas, Tony Dumas scored 13 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter as the Mavericks beat the Boston Celtics 129-124, giving them consecutive wins for the first time since Nov. 9.

Jim Jackson led the Mavericks with 31 points on 11-of-19 shooting and Jason Kidd added 23 points, 12 assists, six rebounds and four steals.

David Wesley had 25 points, including five three-pointers, for the Celtics, who have dropped 11 of their last 14 games.

In Miami, Larry Johnson scored 29 points and Glen Rice chipped in 28 as the Charlotte Hornets downed the Heat 114-106 to move within one game of the .500 mark.

Miami centre Alonzo Mourning had 32 points and matched a career-high with

22 rebounds against his former club.

Johnson scored 18 of his points in the first quarter on 7-of-7 shooting, including 4-of-4 from three-point range.

Miami shot 11-of-26 from three-point range, but committed 23 turnovers, leading to 34 Charlotte points.

In Baltimore, Brent Price made five free throws in the final 30 seconds and set an NBA record with his 13th consecutive three-pointer to lift the Washington Bullets past the New Jersey Nets 93-87.

Price, who finished with 16 points, buried two free throws with 23 seconds left, hit one 11 seconds later and added two more to lift Washington to a 92-87 lead.

Chris Webber finished with 25 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for Washington, which climbed back to the .500 mark through 38 games.

Armon Gilliam led the Nets with 32 points and 14 rebounds.

In Philadelphia, Mookie Blaylock scored 23 points, including four in the final 49 seconds, and Steve Smith added 17 as the Atlanta Hawks rallied for their sixth

straight win, an 82-77 victory over the 76ers.

Andrew Lang had 12 points and Grant Long had 12 rebounds and seven assists for Atlanta.

Vernon Maxwell scored 20 points and Trevor Ruffin had 18 and six assists for the Sixers.

In Portland, Gary Trent scored a season-high 21 points off the bench and Arvydas Sabonis added 17 points as the Trail Blazers rolled past the slumping Phoenix Suns 101-84.

Portland, which played without injured starters Rod Strickland and Clifford Robinson, won for the fifth time in its last six games.

Phoenix fell to 0-2 under Cotton Fitzsimmons, who re-

turned as coach Tuesday after Paul Westphal was fired.

Michale Finley and Wayne Tisdale scored 18 points apiece for the injury-plagued Suns, losers of seven of eight.

In Los Angeles, Cedric Ceballos scored 12 of his 25 points in the decisive third quarter and Nick Van Exel added 23 to lift the visiting Lakers to their season-high fourth straight victory, a 106-100 win over the Clippers.

Loy Vaught scored 28 points and grabbed 15 rebounds while Terry Dehere chipped in 17 points for the Clippers, who have dropped three in a row.

The Lakers built an 84-71 lead after three quarters with a dominating 27-12 third period.

RESULTS

Indiana	89	Detroit	81
Atlanta	82	Philadelphia	77
Washington	93	New Jersey	87
Charlotte	114	Miami	106
Minnesota	106	San Antonio	92
Dallas	129	Boston	124
Utah	111	Orlando	99
Portland	101	Phoenix	84
LA Lakers	106	LA Clippers	100
New York	100	Seattle	97 (OT)

1st Division Basketball Championship

Orthodoxi top standings as Ahli lose to Jazireh

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Basketball fans who did not attend Friday night's Jazireh-Ahli match thinking Al Ahli would score an outright win missed one of the most thrilling matches in Jordanian basketball for years.

Most enthusiasts of the game in fact did not attend knowing that Al Ahli who won the title in the past three years would surely beat their opponents.

While Al Jazireh had given former champions Al Orthodoxi a hard time before losing 72-66, they were expected to rise up to the challenge of facing the Kingdom's most-coherent lineup of players while only trying to keep a slight difference in the score.

But what no one expected was Al Jazireh's 76-73 win over Al Ahli!

It was Al Jazireh's first win over Al Ahli in decades and Al Ahli's first defeat in Jordanian basketball since 1991. In fact Al Ahli had only lost to Al Orthodoxi whenever they were defeated as both teams have maintained an unrivalled dominance over the game for decades.

How Al Jazireh came out victorious is still perplexing for those who follow up the game. Yet the first post-match statements of both coaches partly explains the result.

"We have been working for this for a long time. We know we can and will improve our standing. If we don't take first place this season we'll do it next year," Al Jazireh's coach Fadi Sabbah told the Jordan Times.

On the other hand, Al Ahli's assistant coach Ghaith Al Najjar preferred to say: "No comment."

Logic and expectations had it that Al Ahli would win and maintain a winning streak before facing all-time rivals Al Orthodoxi. The reasons for such expectations is the circumstances surrounding both camps.

While Al Ahli are playing this championship without star centre Naser Bushnaq who is currently playing in Qatar, the team had a thorough training schedule and were expecting to overcome Al Orthodoxi who are now relying on a young relatively inexperienced lineup.

Al Jazireh on the other hand did not have any serious preparation for the championship. They not only lost the efforts of a key player Naser Alawneh who quit the team but coach Imad Al Saeed also abruptly left for Austria.

The team was only recently handed over to coach Fadi Sabbah who had less than a month to prepare the players, mostly of the U-22 team, lacking fitness and proper matches prior to the competition.



Marwan Ma'touq



Yousef Abu Baker

"I do not expect any team to seriously challenge us for five years at the least," Al Ahli's Najjar had told the Jordan Times prior to the start of the championship.

However, Al Ahli will not only have to seriously consider Al Orthodoxi's challenge but also Al Jazireh's as well. Second round matches of the three teams will be crucial in the fight for the title.

Al Orthodoxi now lead the standings after they beat Al Jalil 80-50 in another match Friday and will face Al Ahli in the first round final Thursday Jan. 25.

Jazireh-Ahli 76-73

While Al Ahli were saved by veteran Marwan Ma'touq, Al Jazireh's hero was Husam Lutfi.

Ma'touq scored 26 points for Al Ahli (including 7 three-pointers) while Lutfi scored 23 points for Al Jazireh.

At first Al Ahli appeared well below their usual scoring average and everyone thought they would improve as the match progressed.

Scoring remained close at first with Al Jazireh leading 7-4 and 20-16 after a three-pointer by playmaker Saqr Khirfan.

Al Ahli tied the score in the 16th minute and the score remained close throughout the half which Al Jazireh ended at 31-30 with seven consecutive points by Lutfi.

While Yousef Zaghloul, who did not score in the first half and only had six points throughout the match, was out with three fouls the burden of scoring fell on Ma'touq who gave his team a 37-33 lead and again at 42-35 after a three-pointer. Al Jazireh's Ghaith Ennabi earned his fourth personal four greatly

hampering his playing ability.

Al Ahli led 44-35 and over 200 attending fans thought Al Ahli had things in control. However, in the following five minutes Al Jazireh led by Yousef Abu Baker outscored their opponents 13-1 to take the lead 48-45 displaying that they were not contemplating defeat.

Al Ahli's captain Zaghloul then netted two consecutive three pointers to tie the score 51-51. However again Al Jazireh's players outscored the tideholders 14-2 to take their biggest lead in the game at 63-53.

Al Ahli's Mohammad Al Shamali who together with Ma'touq came through for his team at the difficult moments showed a fighting spirit which his teammates seemed to lack in this match.

Al Ahli narrowed the gap to 67-61 as Ma'touq, Shamali and Ramez Ham-moudh scored, while Al Jazireh's Ma'an Odeh secured rebounding for his team and scored to keep his team's lead 69-61.

While the gap was reduced, Al Jazireh kept their lead at 70-65 and 72-66 before Ma'touq sank in two consecutive three pointers that reduced Al Jazireh's lead to 74-72.

The final minute was difficult for both teams, especially their fans.

Al Jazireh's Khirfan scored from a free throw to make it 75-72. With 0.23 seconds remaining Al Ahli realised that only a three pointer would tie the match. However with 0.11 seconds remaining such an attempt by Ma'touq was fouled and he had a chance to tie the score from free throws. Ma'touq's superb shooting ability then failed him and Al Jazireh sealed the match with a precious 76-73 win.

STANDINGS

	P	W	L	SF	SA	PTS
Orthodoxi	3	3	-	285	181	6
Ahli	3	2	1	270	171	5
Jazireh	3	2	1	202	185	5
Jalil	4	1	3	228	273	5
Watani	3	-	3	163	338	3

African Nations Cup

S. African improve chances; Ghana, Gabon in quarters

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Mark Williams' goal booked South Africa, 1-0 winners over Angola here on Saturday, an almost certain quarter-final spot in the African Nations Cup.

South Africa seemed unsettled by the wet conditions and looked a different side from the exuberant team which thrashed Cameroon 3-0 in the opening match of the tournament last Saturday.

But in the 57th minute, an Eric Tinkler free kick was parried by Angola keeper Orlando, and Williams, of Wolverhampton Wanderers, pounced on the loose ball and fired home.

Angola, who lost 2-1 to Egypt, have virtually no chance of making the quarter-finals.

South Africa were particularly subdued in the first half. Midfielder Eric Tinkler hit the crossbar in the first minute, but from then on, neither side had a serious chance in the first period. About 40,000 turned out for the match, a great deal

less than the approximate 60,000, who turned out for South Africa's 3-0 win in the opening match of the tournament last Saturday.

Worrying for South Africa coach Clive Barker, Angola, mere outsiders for the event, had most of the possession before the break and looked comfortable in midfield, with Joni prominent.

Campes was nearly through in the 19th minute after South Africa defender Sizwe Motau hit a terrible back pass to keeper Andre Arendse, who just got to the ball in time.

A minute later, Buthelezi hit a long-range shot well over, and Paulao countered with an effort just wide of Arendse's post on the half hour.

After the break, South Africa came more into the match, with "Shoes" Moschoe heading on target, moments before Leeds United striker Phil Masinga shot over.

And two minutes before the goal, Angola had their

beset chance of the match when Tubia shot straight at Arendse from 10-yards following a goalmouth scramble.

Masinga, prominent throughout, had an eventful last half-hour.

After immense pressure from South Africa, a Masinga header hit the stanchion of Angola's goal minutes before he was stretched from the field suffering from cramp.

Then, with four minutes to go, Masinga was booked for knocking the ball into the net with his hand.

Ghana, Gabon in quarters

Ghana and Gabon became the first two African Nations Cup sides to book their places in the quarter-finals on Friday.

Ghana beat Tunisia 2-1 in Port Elizabeth with goals from Abedi Pele and Charles Akonnor to top Group D with six points. Imed Ben Younes equalised for Tunisia.

Gabon beat Zaire 2-0 in Durban, enough to earn

them a quarter-final spot after losing 2-1 to Liberia in their first match. Brice Mackaya hit a 21st minute penalty and Aurelien Bekogo-Zolo scored a spectacular goal in the 34th minute.

It was Gabon's first ever victory in the finals after two heavy which Johannesburg by at least two goals which would take them and Gabon into the quarter-finals together on goal difference.

Atoning for their bad finishing in front of goal on Tuesday in a 2-1 defeat to Liberia, Gabon made no mistake this time with two first half goals.

Gabon striker Guy Roger Nzamba had a hand in both. He was brought down by Zairean goalkeeper Pangi Merikani in the 21st minute when he chased a through ball into the box from Aurelien Bekogo-Zolo.

Brice Mackaya scored from the resulting penalty. Nzamba dummied his way past two defenders 13 minutes later on the right before slipping the ball across the

face of the goal for the unmarked Bekogo-Zolo to blast past Merikani.

Drug-free Nations Cup: Chairman of the African Nations Cup and medical committee Peter Matshke revealed there had been no positive drugs tests at the tournament so far.

At half-time of each match, an official and representatives of either team select two players' numbers from both teams at random from a bag.

The players are identified 15 minutes before the end of each match and taken to the medical centre where samples are taken by a CAF appointed doctor.

The university of Bloemfontein is the site for the tests, the only IOC approved laboratory in Africa.

Decision on Nigeria at end of month: African Federation (CAF) president, Issa Hayatou revealed on Saturday a two-day meeting of the tournament organising com-

mittee would be held on Jan. 28 and 29 to discuss problems during the tournament.

The punishment for Nigeria, who pulled out over fears of players' safety, will be discussed. CAF rules state any team which pulls out of the event 30 days before the start, as happened with Nigeria, will be banned for the next two tournaments in 1998 and 2000.

And FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter confirmed any CAF suspension would be upgraded worldwide.

However Hayatou denied the meeting would be dominated with discussions over Nigeria's punishment. "There are many other items on the agenda," he told AFP.

Scouts converge on Africa: The African Nations Cup has attracted much interest from football observers around the world. Italy's coach Arrigo Sacchi is expected in the country to watch the knockout stages of the event, according to organisers.

Ivory Coast keeper warns of tricky Mozambique

PORT ELIZABETH (AFP) — Ivory Coast's Alain Gouamene, playing a record-equaling sixth consecutive African Nations Cup, warned Mozambique, their opponents here on Sunday (kick 1230 GMT), could prove a tougher proposition than expected.

"We have at least to beat Mozambique, who surprised Tunisia, if we hope to reach our goal and qualify for the quarter-finals," said Gouamene. "But we must watch out — it's a tricky match."

Goalkeeper Gouamene, who holds the record of Nations Cup appearances with 28-year-old compatriot Abdoulaye Traore, said they should not be too downhearted to find themselves bottom of Port Elizabeth's Group D.

Ivory Coast lost 2-0 to Ghana in their first match.

"We have 12 new faces compared to the squad in Tunisia two years ago. And Anthony Yeboah and Abedi Pele are great players, who

scored magnificent goals which I could do nothing about," Gouamene added.

Toulouse keeper Gouamene only came to this event in an emergency request from French Ivory Coast coach Pierre Pleimelding when the first choice keeper got injured. He was not on the original 22-name list.

Gouamene, 29, reached the pinnacle of African football when Ivory Coast won the title in 1992, when he kept five clean sheets.

He was voted best keeper of the tournament after fabulous saves in the semi-final and final. He saved a penalty in open play against Cameroon in the semi-final, before saving another three in the shootout.

And in the final shootout, he saved the championship-winning penalty from Ghana's Anthony Baffoe, a former Metz and Nice player.

Both Ivory Coast and Mozambique need to win to give themselves a good chance of qualifying for the quarter-finals.

Sampras crashes out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE (Agencies) — Pete Sampras lost his world No. 1 ranking when he was bludgeoned out of the Australian Open in straight sets on Saturday by towering Australian teenager Mark Philippoussis.

Playing in front of a fiercely partisan crowd on the Flinders Park centre court, the 19-year-old Philippoussis produced the performance of his young life to decisively beat the top-seeded American 6-4, 7-6 (11-9) 7-6 (7-3) in two hours 13 minutes.

Sampras, who had won 16 consecutive Grand Slam matches, including Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, had few answers to his opponent's pounding serves and penetrating ground strokes which grew more confident and lethal as the end drew near.

His stunning exit means that Sampras loses the number one spot to fellow American and world number two Andre Agassi or Austrian Thomas Muster, who are both through to the final 16.

Sampras, in his worst Grand Slam result in five years, tried charging the net to take control of the match in the third set but failed to prevent a deciding tiebreak.

A resigned Sampras later pointed to his 40th-ranked rival's serve as the key to his improbable victory.

"I did not play badly but when he's serving that big there is nothing you can do. He is very talented. Time will tell if he can be that consistent week in, week out," he told a post-match news conference.

Philippoussis, still shaking his head at the power and accuracy he unleashed on his serve, told reporters after the match that he never felt better on his own delivery.

"Tonight was like nothing else I have felt before. I felt I couldn't do anything wrong on the service tonight," he said.

"I was so confident on my serve. I just felt I could toss it up and ace (it). It was an unbelievable feeling."

Philippoussis said he tried to forget his opponent was the world's top player and took each point at a time, but his nerves told as he served for victory in the final tiebreak.

"I was serving for the match and my hand was just shaking.... I'm just happy I served win," he said.

"I believe in myself now and that I can beat anyone in the world after tonight," he added.

Earlier Boris Becker played one of his finest matches at the Australian Open to crush fierce-biting Swede Magnus Larsson and reach the fourth round here Saturday.

Becker, drawn into two five-set dogfights in his opening two matches, had a relatively easy task against 19th-ranked Larsson — who missed a seeding by two ranking placings — to romp home, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3, 6-3 in 110 minutes.



Ball boys wipe dry the centre court with towels after a heavy rain shower stopped play during the third round match between Australia's Michael Yebbutt and Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov at the Australian Open in Melbourne January 20. The roof was closed and the match continued (Reuters photo)



Yevgeny Kafelnikov

"That was one of my better matches here at the Australian Open," 28-year-old Becker said. "I haven't had many good ones over the years, but that was one of my top ones."

"I had an extremely good start and the problem with Magnus is that when he is down he goes a lot for his shots and plays very risky."

Becker, a winner here in 1991, relished the opportunity of playing his centre court match with the roof closed after rain.

"Obviously, when it's indoors I like it very much, but on the other hand I had an opponent who likes it too and he has won big titles," said Becker.

"I had very good timing on my serve and that started in the last two sets of my last match (against Swede Thomas Johansson). It just went on today.... I faced one break point in the whole match and Magnus is not a really bad returner."

Becker's next opponent will be either New Zealander Brett Steven or Dutchman Jan Siemerink, whose match was twice rain-interrupted

Saturday. Becker deserved the first set, which went to a tiebreaker. He had break points in the fifth game and took Larsson to duce in the seventh game.

He grabbed an early break-through in the second set, smashing a winner at 0-40 in the second game and surviving the sole break point against him in the ninth game to go two-up.

The triple Wimbledon champion again broke the Swede to love in the seventh game of the third set when Larsson sent a backhand into the net.

Larsson again conceded his serve in the ninth game with three rash efforts, with Becker taking the match on the first of two match points at 15-40.

Sixth seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov overcame a rain-delay as the retractable roof enclosed the centre court to best 112th-ranked Australian Michael Yebbutt in a third round match, 7-5, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2 in two hours 41 minutes.

The Russian, one of the hardest working players on the men's circuit will take on

American Mali Vai Washington in the round of 16. Washington ousted Colombian Mauricio Hadad in straight sets.

Kafelnikov declared: "I like my chances if I get through the next round, just watch out. I'm going to be very dangerous."

Sweden's Thomas Enqvist, the seventh seed, overcame Argentina's Hernan Gumy 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-1 to move into the fourth round where he will face either 10th seed Goran Ivanisevic or Italian Renzo Furlan, whose match was delayed until Sunday because of the rain.

Before early afternoon storms hit the Flinders Park complex, women's seeds, No. 8 Anke Huber and No. 10 Lindsay Davenport had straight set wins.

Huber swept through Ludmila Richterova in 55 minutes winning 6-2, 6-1, while big-hitting Davenport accounted for Finland's Nanne Dahlman, 6-4, 7-5.

Swiss Starlet, 15-year-old Martina Hingis breezed past Japanese Mana Endo, 6-1, 6-1 to reach the fourth round of a Grand Slam for the second time. The first was at last year's U.S. Open in New York.

Second seed Conchita Martinez, playing indoors, whipped through young German Jana Kandarr, 6-3, 6-0.

Bailey bests Powell, Surin

MONTREAL (R) — Canadian Donovan Bailey exploded at the tape to win the 60 metres at the Montreal Grand Prix indoor athletics meeting on Friday.

Bailey's victory in 6.54 seconds left Donovan Powell of Jamaica second in 6.55 and world indoor champion and hometown hero Bruny Surin third in 6.58.

Bailey earned \$1,500 for winning the race and an extra \$5,000 for winning a three-race sprint series that started in Hamilton, Ontario last Friday.

In that meet, Bailey was first in the 50 metres, Powell second and Surin fourth. Two days later in Saskatoon, Surin claimed the 60 metres with Powell again second and Bailey third.

Powell earned \$3,000 for being second in the series and Surin collected \$2,000 for being third based on the cumulative times of the three races.

Bailey was pleased with victory, if not his form. "I concentrated on the start too much and had I accelerated in the middle as I usually do I would have run a better time and a better race."

"If I stay healthy this should be a great year. I intend to win every race I enter and no matter how I do it, if I win I'm happy, sort of."

The finish was true Bailey with a blinding burst of speed over the last 20 metres that carried him past Powell and Surin in front of a pro-Surin crowd.

"I'm disappointed," said Surin, who finished second to Bailey at the world championships in Sweden. "He won the battle, but he didn't win the war. The war will be in Atlanta."

Veteran Irish miler Marcus O'Sullivan came from behind to win the mile in four minutes, 03.97 seconds.

"I was happy with the result, but not with the time," he said. "I apologise for not breaking four minutes, but maybe I'll be invited back and I'll fix that."

O'Sullivan, who has recorded more than 85 sub-four minute miles, says he wants to retire when he does it 100 times.

Sevatheda Fynes of Bahamas was the women's star of the night as she claimed victory at both 60 metres and 200 metres.

American Bill Deering won the pole vault for the third time in as many meets, this time with a vault of 5.55 metres. But he missed three times at 5.66, which would have established a Canadian indoor record.



Mexico's Cuauhtemoc Blanco (15) and Guatemala's Eduardo Acevedo battle to control the ball, during first half action in their semifinal match in the CONCACAF tournament in San Diego (Reuters photo)

Mexico take on Brazil in CONCACAF final

SAN DIEGO (R) — Mexico placed themselves on the verge of repeating as CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer champions by edging Guatemala 1-0 in a semifinal match on Friday.

Cuauhtemoc Blanco scored in the second half to relieve the anxieties of a delirious pro-Mexico crowd of 42,221 and preserve the job of manager Bora Milutinovic for at least one more match.

Mexico, winner of the last Gulf Cup tournament in 1993, needed more than an hour to subdue a stubborn Guatemalan defence and

advance to Sunday's final against Brazil.

Brazil, whose under-23 squad has won three matches in the competition without conceding a goal, beat the United States 1-0 in the other semifinal played on Thursday.

Blanco, one of eight Olympic team players chosen by Milutinovic, ran onto Joaquin del Olmo's throw-in to roll his shot past Guatemalan goalkeeper Edgar Estrada in the 64th minute for his first goal of the tournament.

Mexico fielded three changes from the squad

which also edged Guatemala 1-0 five days ago in a Group A match and started off running.

But despite playing with three forwards and midfielders Ramon Ramirez, Joaquin de Olmo and Alberto Garcia Aspe pushing forward, Mexico struggled to break down a six-man Guatemalan back line fortified with an effective offside trap.

Neither team generated a serious scoring chance for most of the first half, and when Mexico did break through, they found Estrada in sharp form.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHCH ©1994 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

NO FREE LUNCH

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ K 10 4
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ K 9 5 4
♣ Q 10

WEST
♠ J 9 7
♥ A J 8 5
♦ Q 10 6 3 2
♣ A 2

EAST
♠ Q 8
♥ Q 10 4 2
♦ A J 7
♣ J 9 8 4

SOUTH
♠ A 6 5 3 2
♥ 9 5
♦ C 8
♣ A K 7 6 5 3

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 1♣ 10 Pass
1♠ Pass 2NT Pass
2♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠. Bewary of the possibility of cheap tricks. Keeping your lines of communication open can be more important than winning a trick with a relatively low card.

South's bidding showed at least ten cards in the black suits. North correctly raised to game in spades and West attacked with the deuce of clubs.

Obviously, the club lead was either from length or a singleton. Declarer tried to protect against both possibilities by finessing the ten, covered by the jack and captured by the ace. Declarer cashed the king and ace of spades and, leaving the high trump outstanding, started on clubs.

A club to the queen was allowed to win, and declarer's predicament began to dawn — there was no fast entry back to the closed. Declarer tried the king of diamonds, but the defenders were alert. East won the ace and shifted to a heart to West's ace. West drew the remaining trump and declarer called up leant; a trick in each suit — down one.

Let's return to trick one and see what happens if South simply wins the first trick with the queen of clubs, then cashes two high trumps. Now, declarer can start on clubs from the top. West can ruff at any time, but it doesn't help the defense — declarer still has three trumps in hand and dummy one. The table's trump will be used to ruff a club, setting up the suit, and no matter how the defense proceeds, declarer will always have at least one trump with which to get back to hand to cash the good clubs.

Toyota favourites for Monte Carlo

PARIS (R) — Fearless German Armin Schwarz sets off on Saturday favourite to win the non-World Championship but still prestigious Monte Carlo Rally.

Schwarz will be driving a new Toyota Celica GT-four entered by private Italian team Grifone and bought from Toyota team Europe after they were banned for cheating in the Catalonia rally in Spain in October.

The car has been prepared to exactly the same specification that it would have had if the works team had not been thrown out of the 1996 World Series.

Most leading constructors are shunning the winter classic, which still carries its unique multi-city start, and will begin their seasons with the championship opener in Sweden next month.

"At the time they were banned, Toyota were preparing cars to come here, knowing that the race would not be part of the World Championship," said rally official Rene Isoart. "It's a pity be-

cause we believe that if they had been allowed to come, others would have followed."

Organisers, sharing non-championship status with the tour of Corsica and the season-ending British Rac Rally, believe there would still be much interest in the Monte.

"We don't really mind as we'll have over 150 participants," said Rally spokesman Patric Mannoury. "Last year's San Remo rally had only 80."

French constructor Peugeot, back in the rally after a 10-year absence, will also be a rated contender, with two experienced French drivers in Francois Delecour and Francois Chatriot.

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* ACE VENTURA "2"

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CONCORD "2"

* Batman Forever
Shows: 3:30
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NATO to guard suspected mass graves in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) will send troops to guard suspected mass graves where Bosnian Serbs are accused of hiding the bodies of thousands of murdered Muslims and Croats, peacekeeping sources said on Saturday.

The deployment could take place within days now that NATO has achieved the separation of the former warring sides along most of the 1,000-kilometre front line dividing Serb and Muslim-Croat territory in Bosnia.

The fate of more than 24,000 Muslim men missing in Serb hands during the 3½-year war is holding up a full exchange of registered prisoners.

Some 220 prisoners were handed over on Friday, the deadline for the swap, but another 700 are still in prison. Red Cross officials said no further prisoner releases were planned in Bosnia, despite a senior U.S. official's statement that he expected the 700 still held captive in defiance of an international deadline to be freed.

"More than 700 prisoners are still in jails but the releases must continue," Pierre Gauthier, spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), told AFP.

Christophe Girod, another ICRC official, said, however, that there is currently "no sign that anything is going to happen."

Bosnia's three factions released 218 prisoners Friday but fell short of full compliance with a midnight deadline for liberating all those detained during the war.

The deadline, along with a requirement for troops to withdraw from confrontation lines, were important milestones in enforcing the landmark peace accord signed last month in Paris.

Mr. Gauthier said the Americans, who sponsored the peace deal, were "furious" about the non-compliance concerning prisoners but "are obligated to minimise publicly this violation of the accord by saying they are satisfied with the releases Friday."

The ground commander of the NATO force implementing the Bosnian peace accord, British Lieutenant General Michael Walker, met Saturday in Sarajevo with the three factions on compliance with the troop withdrawal and prisoner releases. Gen. Walker has already ruled out military action to force the freeing of prisoners.

Amor Masovic, head of the Bosnian prisoner exchange

commission, told AFP there were no releases planned for Saturday.

"Our position is absolutely the same. There will be no release of all prisoners from our prisons until the Serbs release all their prisoners, that is clear," Mr. Masovic said.

Mr. Girod said the situation may change in coming days.

NATO sources said American troops would guard grave sites seen by spy satellites and Western journalists near Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia where Serbs are alleged to have killed several thousand captured Muslim men last July.

British troops would secure other sites around Prijedor in northeast Bosnia. The region includes a mine at Ljubija where Serbs are claimed to have hidden 8,000 corpses of Muslims and Croats killed in 1992-93.

Mass killings by the Bosnian Serbs form the basis of war crimes indictments issued by a U.N. tribunal against "president" Radovan Karadzic and army commander General Ratko Mladic.

NATO ground and air forces were meanwhile checking to ensure that all sides had withdrawn two kilometres from either side of the front line as laid down by the peace agreement.

"Once the zone of separation is out of the way, securing the grave sites may well happen quickly," a NATO source said. "We will be asked to do something... it will not go away."

NATO commanders earlier resisted getting involved in the war crimes issue, preferring to concentrate on peacekeeping.

Troops of the first U.S. Armoured Corps are garrisoned 15 kilometres from Srebrenica where journalists who eluded Serb controls this week reported finding gruesome evidence of hasty burials on a huge scale.

Men in Srebrenica were separated from their families after Serbs overran the U.N. safe area in July and 3,000 were reported by U.N. and Red Cross officials to have been shot.

Another 5,000 men from the mountain settlement are missing although some are thought to have escaped to government territory.

Charges against Mr. Karadzic and Gen. Mladic — who was present during the Srebrenica offensive — relate specifically to the killings.

The United States wants to send senior State Department official John Shattuck to Srebrenica as soon as possible.

Paris, Algiers set talks on Air Algerie flights

PARIS (R) — In a new sign of warming ties between Paris and Algiers, France said on Saturday it planned talks soon with Algeria aimed at resuming Air Algerie flights between the two countries' capital cities.

The foreign ministry, citing recent positive diplomatic contacts with Algiers after a period of souring relations, said a special working group had been set up with an eye to resuming the flights, which were cut off in June in a diplomatic row over security and airport facilities.

Junior Transport Minister Anne-Marie Idrac will represent France at the first working group meeting, which is expected to take place in Algiers in the near future though a date has not been set, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

All French airlines cancelled their services to Algeria for security reasons after the Christmas eve hijacking of an Air France airliner by guerrillas in Algiers in December 1994.

Air Algerie is the only airline currently flying between France and Algeria, serving the French cities of Lyon and Marseille.

But it cancelled its service to Paris last June after French authorities insisted on transferring its operations to an isolated high-security terminal at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport to the north of Paris, from ORLY to the city's south.

Air Algerie complained the new facilities discriminated

against its passengers.

The suspension, at the start of the summer holiday season, spelled havoc for tens of thousands of Algerian immigrants seeking to return home for their annual leave.

French authorities fear new guerrilla attacks against French targets by guerrillas in Algeria, who accuse Paris, the former colonial power, of siding with Algiers in their battle to topple its military-backed government.

An estimated 50,000 people have died in civil strife since the Algerian authorities cancelled 1992 elections that Islamic fundamentalists were poised to win.

The conflict, spilled over onto French soil last summer when extremists claimed responsibility for a series of bombings in Paris and the Lyon area that killed eight people and injured more than 170.

The Dec. 21, 1994 hijacking and a subsequent diplomatic spat between French President Jacques Chirac and Algerian head of state Liamine Zeroual led to a worsening of ties between Algiers and the former colonial power.

But French and Algerian officials have recently expressed hopes of improved relations following a fence-mending visit to Algiers by National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin and positive talks between French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and his Algerian counterpart Ahmad Attaf.



'ISRAELI CHECK': Israeli police check a Palestinian on his way to vote at a post office in East Jerusalem on Saturday. Israeli police maintained a strong presence in East Jerusalem, something that intimidated many voters and many stayed away from voting in the historic Palestinian elections to a self-rule council and president, neutral observers said (see page one) (AFP photo)

Pope and Chirac avoid N-test issue

VATICAN CITY (Agencies)

— Pope John Paul and President Jacques Chirac avoided controversy over nuclear testing when the French leader visited the Vatican on Saturday, but demonstrators chanting and carrying banners protested outside the city-state.

Although the Pope only a week ago called for a swift ban on nuclear testing, there was no reference to the issue in the public speeches the two men made during the state visit.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said nuclear testing — which France resumed in the South Pacific last year — also did not come up in talks in the Pope's private study.

A Vatican statement said the 40 minutes of private talks, centrepiece of the pomp-filled first state visit by a French president since Charles de Gaulle in 1959, were "very cordial."

It said the Pope and Mr. Chirac discussed the responsibility of France to defend human rights and promote peace. They also discussed ex-Yugoslavia, Middle East peace and Africa.

The Pope also told Mr. Chirac how much the Vatican

cherished freedom of choice in education, the statement said. Previous French governments were involved in rows with the church over attempts to cut off vital subsidies to parochial schools.

Mr. Chirac, wearing a morning coat and a gold ceremonial chain, was whisked into the Vatican to the strains of the French national anthem, the Marseillaise, and the Vatican hymn.

As his motorcade entered St. Peter's Square a small but noisy group of anti-nuclear protesters, one in a Chirac rubber mask, waved flags and banners saying "Chirac, listen to the Pope. Stop nuclear testing."

The square was sealed off. Police moved demonstrators away from a position where they would have been close to Mr. Chirac's passing motorcade.

On Jan. 13, the Pope called for international monitoring of a nuclear test ban treaty — due to be concluded this year — and urged a rapid move towards general total disarmament.

Observers had speculated that he would evoke the subject of France's nuclear tests at Saturday's meeting.

(Continued on page 7)

Gamaa threatens U.S. over Abdul Rahman

CAIRO (AFP)

— The militant Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah threatened Saturday to attack U.S. leaders and interests to avenge a life sentence handed down by a U.S. court on its spiritual leader Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman.

A statement from the group's main armed group sent to AFP threatened to "hit American interests and personalities" and bring the United States to "its knees" until it releases Sheikh Abdul Rahman and nine co-accused.

The blind sheikh was sentenced to life imprisonment by a New York court on Wednesday for his role in plotting a sweeping extremist campaign against U.S. targets and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Sentences for his nine co-defendants ranged from life to 25 years behind bars.

"The Gamaa Al Islamiyah commits itself before God to reply blow for blow and announces that American interests and personalities are from now on legitimate targets for its jihad (holy war) until Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and his brothers are freed from American prisons," the statement said.

"The Americans have chosen war on Islam and will not be victorious because God has promised us victory," it said, calling on "all Muslims across the world to revenge the attacks on their sacred principles and bring the Americans to their knees."

Security measures have already been stepped up around the U.S. embassy in Cairo, one of the largest in the Middle East, after the verdict.

"The plot against the virtuous Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman will not go unpunished and the United States will understand that they are incapable of confronting the soldiers of God, who desire death as much as their soldiers desire life," the Gamaa added.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, 57, denied all charges and told the court: "I pay the price of those who do God's work... my killing will be a martyrdom in the cause of God."

The blind cleric was convicted on Oct. 1, 1995, nine months after his trial began.

The Gamaa has a spearheaded a bloody campaign to topple Mr. Mubarak's government which has left more than 940 people dead since it was launched in March 1992.

So far the group had just waged its campaign on Egypt, it said in the statement. But it accused the Egyptian government of "fighting Islam on its soil to serve the Americans."

Now Washington had opted for "open confrontation with the Islamic movement" after it was "convinced that its allies were incapable of" leading the battle.

(Continued on page 7)

Egypt Brotherhood leader dies; successor plans political party

CAIRO (Agencies)

— The new leader of the Muslim Brotherhood is aiming to found a political party for the first time in the fundamentalist group's efforts to establish Islamic rule in Egypt.

The Brotherhood "wants a political party to have an official presence," Mustapha Mashour, 75, told AFP on Saturday.

Mr. Mashour said he would be named head of the movement "soon" to succeed Mohammad Hamed Abu Nasr, who died Saturday at the age of 83.

It would be the first time the Brotherhood has announced a bid to become a party since its founding in 1928.

"We call for the implementation of Islamic Sharia law and will continue our call by all available means without breaking the law or constitution," Mr. Mashour said.

"We will not turn to violence and we hope that God will allow an opening between us and (the government) to put an end to the injustice of which we have been victims," he said.

The Brotherhood, although banned in 1954, has been tolerated since the mid-1970s, when it said it renounced violence.

But the unofficial truce fell apart last year as the state imprisoned dozens of Brotherhood members and accused the group of backing armed extremists fighting for almost the last four years to topple the government.

Mr. Mashour ruled out calls by younger Brotherhood members for an end to the group's non-violent stance.

saying: "We will continue on the moderate path and not follow the unconditional enthusiasm of the young."

The new leader backed the first ever application for a political party, made by other young Brotherhood cadres "who have called for the creation of the Al Wasat (centre) party."

"We no longer want the government to call us a banned and underground organisation. (Al Wasat) would not be an alternative group (to the Brotherhood) but a political force which would allow us to have a newspaper and headquarters."

"I hope the government will authorise the party, but I think it will refuse," he said. The group's headquarters in downtown Cairo was closed by police in November after a military court sentenced 54 Brothers to up to five years in prison.

The Brotherhood has been involved in a number of assassinations in its 68-year history.

Its military wing, created in 1942, murdered Prime Minister Ahmad Mahir three years later. In 1948, it assassinated a judge, Ahmad Khazindar, who had sentenced a number of its members, and later the same year another premier Nuqrashi Pasha.

In 1954, President Gamal Abdul Nasser accused the Brotherhood of attempting to gun him down and banned the group.

Mr. Mashour, born in 1921 in the northern Nile Delta region of Sharqiya, studied physical sciences at Cairo University before being appointed to the state

Syria criticises Qatar

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria accused Qatar on Saturday of hurting Arab solidarity by making overtures to Israel and distancing itself from Saudi Arabia.

"Qatar is leaving the Arab ranks... which will no doubt lead it into the trenches of our adversaries," said the official Al Thawra newspaper, in the first Syrian attack on Qatar in many years.

The paper said it feared Qatar's policies would lead it down a dangerous path.

Israel signed a letter in October with the U.S. company Enron to import natural gas from Qatar, and the two countries are discussing the establishment of commercial offices in each other's territories.

Qatar's relations with Saudi Arabia have also been strained since it refused the nomination of a Saudi to head the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which also includes Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

"The attempt to create dissonance between GCC members in various ways and using different pretexts only serves enemies of the Gulf region and the Arab Nation and will eventually turn against Qatar," Al Thawra said.

The criticism came after Syrian President Hafez Al Assad met Thursday with the former emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani, who is touring Arab states to garner support for his plans to return to power.

Sheikh Khalifa, who was overthrown by his son in a bloodless coup on June 27, said at the end of last month that he planned to retake control of Qatar.

In Muscat on Saturday, Oman's Sultan Qabous Ben Sa'id met with the former emir, the official OMA news agency said. It did not give details.

Sheikh Khalifa has also been to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Egypt in his bid to seek support for his return to power.

Airport sources said the representative of Sultan Qabous and several ministers greeted Sheikh Khalifa upon his arrival from Syria.

The former emir's tour has put pressure on the Qatari emir, Sheikh Hamad.

Gulf officials say the former emir had been given receptions befitting a head of state during his tour, angering Doha.

Britain's afternoon winter gloom to stay

LONDON (R) — Scottish members of parliament Friday wrecked a plan to move Britain's clocks forward in winter to give an extra hour of afternoon daylight. An English MP, John Butterfill, introduced a bill to bring British time into line with European time, saying this would not only help business but would also reduce road accidents and curb crime. But MPs from Scotland argued that the change would mean even gloomier mornings in their northern regions. They joined forces with Eurosceptics opposed to closer links to Europe to keep debate going until the bill ran out of time for a final vote. "The forces of darkness have won," said one of Mr. Butterfill's supporters, David Wiltshire. The proposed change stirred up deep feelings, with arguments raging inside and outside parliament for weeks. Mr. Butterfill won support from businesses, charities, police and road safety organisations, but opponents dubbed the bill's backers "time bandits" involved in "daylight robbery". Mr. Butterfill told parliament the change would make it safer for people to go out in the evening by transferring an hour of daylight from the morning. Crime would be cut, he said. "It's a fact that criminals don't get up in the early mornings to commit crimes. They are usually still in bed, probably sleeping off a hangover induced by the proceeds of their previous crimes." But the bill angered right-wingers in the Conservative Party who have plagued Prime Minister John Major's efforts to take a constructive line on Europe. One of them, Teddy Taylor, dismissed it as a "stupid Eurointegration measure."

Windsor Castle damage costs \$55 million

LONDON (R) — Windsor Castle, the country home of Britain's Queen Elizabeth that was badly damaged by a fire in 1992, will cost an estimated \$36 million (\$55 million) to restore, a British government minister said Thursday. After the fire, the queen opened Buckingham Palace, her official London residence, to tourists to help pay for repairs. Buckingham Palace has said it expects restoration of the castle complex, a bodgepodge of architectural styles dating back to the 11th century, to be finished in 1998. Most of the damage to Queen Elizabeth's favourite residence, west of London, hit a 14th-century chapel and rooms housing a priceless art collection. Most of it was saved by volunteers directed by the queen's second son, Prince Andrew. Iain Sproat, national heritage minister of state, told parliament £10.8 million (\$16 million) would come from public funds. Windsor Castle was not insured because the premium would have been too high.

Wind rips chunk off U.N. General Assembly dome

UNITED NATIONS (R) — A large chunk of metal was ripped from the dome of the U.N. General Assembly building during a fierce windstorm Friday, a U.N. spokesman said. It measured about 13 feet (4 metres) by 10 feet (3 metres) and landed on the back of a parked car, belonging to Togo's U.N. mission, causing damage but no injuries. The hole in the dome's outer lining also resulted in a minor leak inside the Assembly hall, the spokesman added.

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